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ISSUE 82 · JULY 2003 · £4.99

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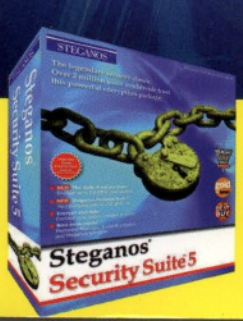

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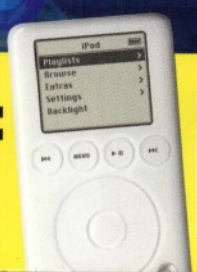

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Issue 82

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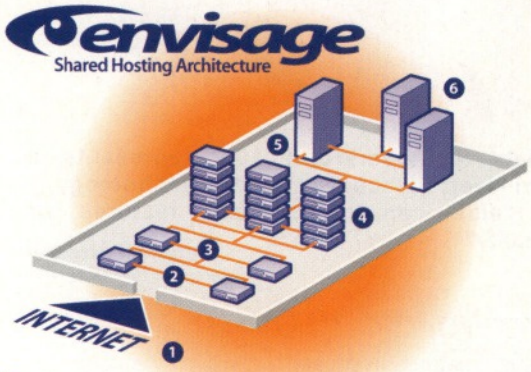

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Welcome

WE ASK THE *PRACTICAL INTERNET* TEAM WHAT THEIR PERFECT JOB WOULD BE

James Thornton
Features Editor

"I'd love to be a zookeeper because I'm a massive animal lover. I think I'm more than qualified as I have lots of experience of working with monkeys."

Mark Billen
Staff Writer

"Being a keen guitarist I'd have to say I'd be a rock star. One thing is for sure, I'd be guaranteed a whole load more groupies than working for *Practical Internet*!"

Colleen Johnson
Sub Editor

"I would be a ballroom dancing teacher, so I could dance during work hours and stop feeling guilty when I flop down in front of the TV after a long day's work."

Nicky Bartlett
Senior Designer

"My perfect job would be to become a chocolate taster, where I could scoff choccie along with a lovely glass of cold white wine all day and get paid for it!"

Lee Cornish
Multimedia Editor

"My dream job would be to have my own product design company so I could shape the products of the future. I'd have my own swanky office as well."

Editor's welcome

How many of us can say that we're truly proud of our Web site? We spend ages promising to get one up and running, talking optimistically about the hours and hours we're going to devote to making it the best it can possibly be. Then, when it comes down to the hard graft, we bang out something that just wasn't what we intended. The result is a Web presence that doesn't do you justice, and ends up making you wish you hadn't bothered at all.

Hopefully we can help you out with this month's cover feature, where we show you how you can learn from the big boys and plan, design and build the Web site you always knew you were capable of. Don't leave your big idea festering in the back of a notebook any longer – turn it into something that will make people come back time and time again.

There's plenty more in this month's packed *Practical Internet*. See how you can get yourself a new job with the aid of that marvellous thing called the Internet, and take a bit of a glimpse into the world of the low-tech Internet – where graphics are frowned upon and text is king. You'll also find an exploration into fan Web sites, where you'll hear of some people you might not want to meet!

Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

PRACTICAL INTERNET: YOUR GUARANTEE OF VALUE

Why we're the number one Net magazine for:

In-depth features
Each issue of *Practical Internet* contains detailed features on the latest Net topics, brought to you by our team of leading writers. We cover a variety of subjects every month to ensure that you get the complete picture. Our comprehensive news section brings you the latest Internet developments in an unbiased and impartial style.

Expert help
Practical Internet is devoted to making your life as hassle-free as possible, with dedicated sections for Web design and browsing help. With more workshops than our rivals, we aim to keep you up to date with the latest techniques. What's more, our workshops are only written by experts, so you can expect excellent results every time.

Independent advice
We realise how important value for money is, so we provide impartial buying advice every month in our reviews section and buyers' guides. We also provide regular ISP roundups, in addition to money-saving features to keep you informed of the best deals around – and to ensure you carry on getting the best from the Net for less.

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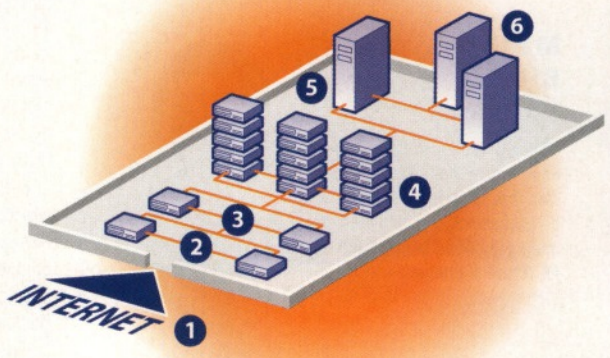

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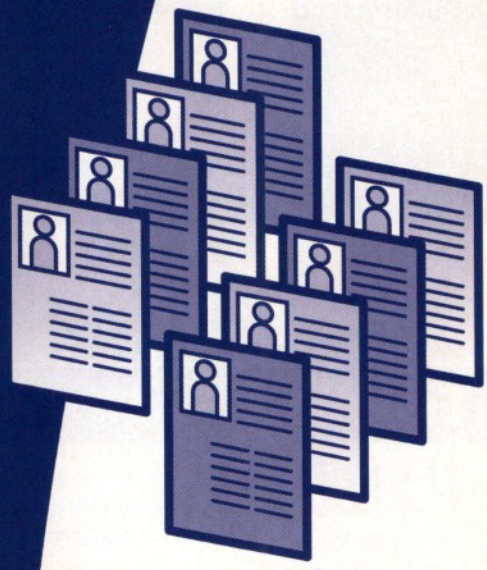

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* Some of the features mentioned above incur additional charges. Please see www.fasthosts.co.uk for full price tariff.

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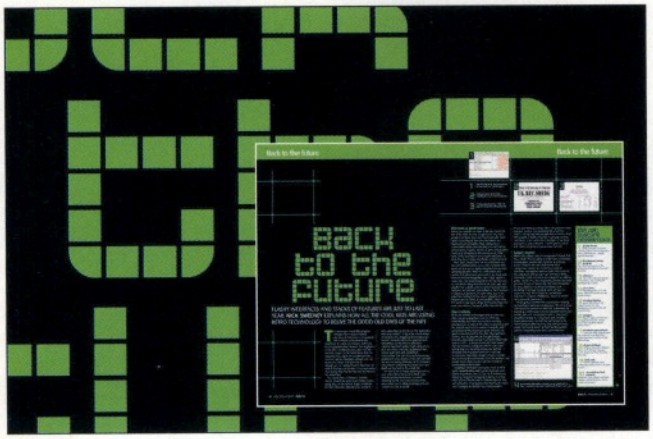

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FIND OUT WHY A GREEN MONSTER IS THE BIGGEST THING ON THE NET – P48
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD STUNNING SITES
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Our workshop on creating a Space Invaders game should give you everything you need to get people coming back to your site for more. Follow the workshop, shove it on your site, and we bet that people will come flocking to your site.
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News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

Broadband connections hit the two million mark

NET USERS SNAP UP HIGH SPEED ACCESS IN THEIR DROVES AS BROADBAND CONTINUES TO GET CHEAPER AND FASTER, BUT ISPS STILL FIND REASON TO HIT OUT AT BT

THE NUMBER OF broadband connections in the UK has topped two million as high speed Internet access gets cheaper and faster.

According to telecoms regulator Oftel (**www.oftel.gov.uk**), there are now 35,000 new broadband connections taken out every week. The figures mean that the number of broadband users in Britain has nearly doubled since last October, when there were 20,000 new connections made per week.

"IT TOOK ONLY SEVEN MONTHS TO REACH TWO MILLION AS LOWER PRICES BOOSTED CONNECTION RATES" DAVID EDMONDS, OFTEL

"Oftel research shows that many broadband connections are people upgrading from narrowband, as they recognise the benefits of fast, always-on Internet access," said David Edmonds, Director General of Telecommunications, Oftel.

"It took two years to reach one million connections, but only seven months to reach two million, as increased competition and lower prices have boosted connection rates."

The big push

The three million mark could be hit even quicker, as the Government has launched a number of initiatives to speed up the roll-out. In a recent Commons debate on high speed Net access, eCommerce minister Stephen Timms said: "It is no secret that compared with a number of other countries the UK has made a slow start with broadband communications."

However, he reassured Parliament that efforts would be made to get everyone rigged up to always-on Internet, with every school in the UK set to be connected by 2006.

BT has also redoubled its efforts to get the nation surfing quicker. The company has announced a national strategy for public and private sector partnerships to extend the potential reach of broadband and bring it within reach of more people living in rural areas. The telecoms giant will also make its 'Broadband Britain Blueprint' available to its competitors in an attempt to create a national broadband-enabled society.

BT has played a major role in the spread of high speed connections, having introduced its broadband 'trigger' system and dropped the wholesale cost of ADSL.

Wholesale havoc

However, not everyone within the industry is happy with BT's strategy. At the recent Commons broadband debate, Brian White, MP for Milton Keynes, North East, expressed concern over BT's dominant position in the wholesale market.

There are currently two BT products on the market: BT IPStream and BT DataStream. The company recently slashed the cost of IPStream, the product used by BT Openworld (among other ISPs) by £1.75, whereas it hadn't cut the price of DataStream, which is used by network providers such as Tiscali.

BT has since lopped 70p off the cost of DataStream, but ISPs are still complaining that they're not getting a fair deal.

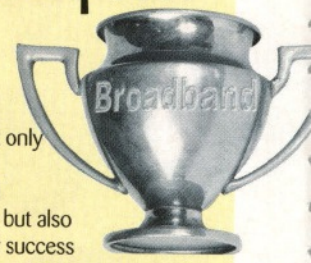
Despite constant sniping at BT's position in the market, Broadband Britain is finally becoming a reality

"We note the 70 pence reduction on wholesale DataStream prices that has come only as a result of the complaints about IPStream price cuts," said Sergio Cellini, CEO, Tiscali UK (**www.tiscali.co.uk**).

"We are still far from satisfied as it is only 40 percent of the recent wholesale IPStream price cut and continues to promote an unfair differential between the products."

BT searches for 'Broadband Champion'

THE QUEST IS ON TO FIND LOCAL HEROES WHO HAVE DONE THEIR BIT FOR BROADBAND BRITAIN



THINK YOU'VE DONE your bit for broadband in your area? Why not get some recognition for your efforts by entering the Internet version of *Pop Idol*?

BT has launched a challenge to search for local champions across the country who are making the most innovative use of ADSL.

The 'Broadband Britain Challenge' is open to businesses and individuals and a team of talent scouts will also tour the country sniffing out outstanding DSL users. Hopefuls will compete in a national final in London on 12 September, when the UK's broadband champs will be honoured.

"Everyone has the potential to be a champion and this is why we wanted to turn to the local communities across the UK," explained Phillipa Winterburn, Head of Broadband Marketing, BT Wholesale.

"This is not only to honour exceptional individuals, but also to use their success to provide inspiration to others."

If you think you've put your fat pipe to good use (that doesn't include getting albums from KaZaA) pop along to **www.broadbandbritainchallenge.co.uk**.

shorts

→ Google is launching a search tool specifically for Web logs, giving material generated by blogs its own tab on the site, according to Reuters. The news follows the launch of a UK news service by the search engine at **news.google.co.uk**, which allows users to search and browse 4,500 updated news sources.

→ They may have missed out in the FA Cup final but Southampton fans can now enjoy the benefits of pay-as-you-go Net access thanks to the launch of a new limited edition pre-paid Web access card. V21 (**www.v21.co.uk**) has produced 5,000 Saints cards, which cost £10 each and provide 30 days of full Internet access from any home computer connected to BT's phone network.

Got a news story?
Please contact
James Thornton
Telephone: 01202 209379
Fax: 01202 299955
Email: jamest@paragon.co.uk

Nifty ways to leave your lover

FED-UP BOYFRIEND DUMPS HIS MISSUS BY PUTTING HER UP FOR SALE ON EBAY

LOOKING TO DUMP your current partner and upgrade to a better model? Why not place an ad on eBay and make a bit of cash from their heartbreak?

After deciding he no longer wanted his "annoying tw*t of a girlfriend", one loyal gentleman auctioned her off under the site's 'Everything Else: Household Appliances' section.

In his glittering sales pitch, the anonymous seller said: "Warning, goods are defective!!! Slightly overweight. Teeth are cold (they come with little yellow jackets). Boring as hell. More varied sex life available from a bag of spuds."

He continued by adding that: "Owner is forced to sell in order to gain access to the TV and stop the b***h watching poxy DIY programs despite not knowing which end of the paintbrush to hold."

Unfortunately for the would-be heartbreaker, eBay decided the posting was inappropriate and withdrew it after a few minutes, despite the fact it had attracted a bid of £10,000.

Who knows what bargains you'll find at eBay

This follows a similar auction in which Aberystwyth was put up for sale on eBay. The Welsh town, which has a population of 11,000, was described as being 'in good condition', but 'can smell slightly' and attracted a highest bid of £22 before being removed.

Pain in Spain

SPANISH MUSIC SITE CAUSES MORE GRIEF FOR RECORD INDUSTRY

THE RECORDING INDUSTRY is on the warpath yet again following the launch of a new Web site that sells music downloads on the cheap.

Puretones (**www.puretones.com**) claims it is taking advantage of a loophole in Spanish copyright law which means it can flog tracks without the permission of the record companies. The Madrid-based firm is charging from $3.99 (£2.44) for eight hours of unlimited downloads to $167 (£102) for a year's access to the songs.

It looks like it could be Viva España for dodgy music pirates

In order to facilitate the download of the songs, Puretones has teamed up with Grokster – a P2P client that is already being hunted by the music industry.

"Distributing music on the Internet without authorisation from the copyright holders is illegal in Spain, as it is everywhere," commented Allen Dixon, lawyer for the International Federation for the Phonographic industry.

Text aid

MOBILE USERS TURN TO THEIR PHONE TO BREAK BAD NEWS

TEXT MESSAGING IS being dubbed the 'coward's way out' following of spate of instances where bad news has been broken to people via SMS.

One Australian man is currently suing his former employers after being sacked by text message.

Traffic warden John Eid received a message saying: "It's official, you no longer work for JNI Traffic Control and you have forfeited any arrangements made."

The man's lawyer, Tom Earls, told the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission: "There was no justification. The lack of procedural fairness culminated in the undignified process of being terminated via an SMS."

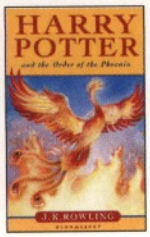
According to Ananova, JNI Traffic Control claims Eid actually resigned and the SMS was simply confirmation of his resignation.

Tech site Silicon.com (**www.silicon.com**) says that more people are avoiding unpleasant face-to-face conversation using the power of text messaging. It reports several instances of partners being dumped via SMS and one case where a woman broke the news of her pregnancy to her mother via text.

Harry's got specs appeal

NEW POTTER BOOK AMAZON'S BEST-EVER SELLER

THE LATEST HARRY Potter book has become the best-selling product in Amazon's history – even before it went on sale.

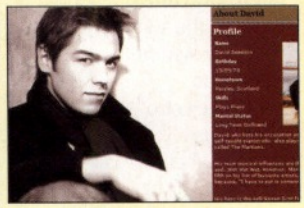


The eagerly-awaited *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* surpassed the previous instalment of the series as the store's top seller, after almost one million Harry fans pre-ordered on the site (**www.amazon.co.uk**).

Amazon received more than 250,000 pre-orders on its British site and took over 875,000 worldwide, making it one of the fastest-selling books of all time. The company says deliveries of the record-breaking tome will be the largest distribution event of any item since buying and selling began on the Net.

Star struck

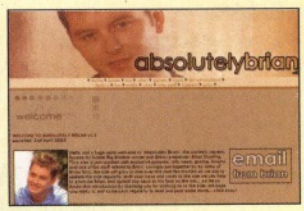
THIS ISSUE WE SEE HOW THE D-CLASS CELEBRITIES OF REALITY TV SHOWS ARE STAKING THEIR CLAIM FOR FAME ON THE NET



David Sneddon

www.davidsneddon.biz

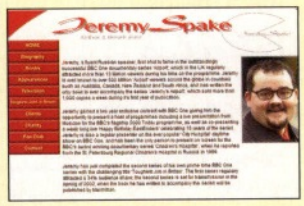
Fame Academy's finest didn't just get a lucrative record deal and swanky flat for his TV exploits. Oh no, he also won the admiration of small girls everywhere and his very own Web site. 'Stop Living a Lie' and take a look.



Brian Dowling

www.briandowling.biz

This Irish funnyman was always going to do well in the *Big Brother* house, and he actually romped home with the winner's prize. Well coincidentally he's now a top children's presenter and this site worships him with photos, news, biographies and chat.



Jeremy Spake

www.jeremyspake.com

If you wanted anyone to find your lost luggage it would probably be Jeremy. *Airport's* star is not only cheeky and cheerful but can speak Russian too. This is his own site but don't mail him your travel problems because he's quit that now!

News shorts

→ What better way to celebrate becoming the millionth member of the Faceparty online community (**www.faceparty.com**) than to have a good old knees-up with a bunch of wacky celebrities? That's exactly what happened to the site's millionth member, Samantha Bradley, who joined Jordan, Bez from The Happy Mondays, Goldie, Zippy and George off *Rainbow*, and a Saddam Hussein lookalike to celebrate. After seeing this photo, the *PI* team is regretting turning down its invitation to the bash.

→ World War Two veterans can now hook up with their old comrades thanks to the launch of a Friends Reunited-style site by the BBC at **www.bbc.co.uk/ww2**. The project is part of the Beeb's plans to commemorate next year's 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings and it hopes the site will provide it with testimony from members of every British Army unit that served during the war.

NEW Software

FIND OUT ABOUT THE LATEST AND GREATEST SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Techno 4

www.ejay.com

If you're the sort that loves to get the party started with some banging electro hard house grooves, then Techno 4 will be music to your ears. The software contains a collection of 4,000 brand new techno samples with an easy-to-use 48-track arranger. There are also five virtual instruments and 12 real-time effects to help turn you into the next Judge Jules.

£29.99

AddWeb Promoter 6.15

www.cyberspacehq.com

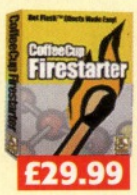
What's the point of building a Web site if no one knows it's there? This latest version of AddWeb's site promotion software comes with a host of tools for giving your pages a big shout out. As well as enabling you to submit your site to thousands of search engines, the program also helps boost your hit count by exchanging links and checking your ranking on search engines.

£42.81

CoffeeCup Firestarter 6.5

www.coffeecup.com

As one of the easiest ways to festoon your site with Flash effects, Firestarter has long been a saviour for the Web author, and this new version is no exception. Allowing you to make Flash navigation systems, graphics and logos, the new version boasts more image effects and enhanced WAV to MP3 conversion.



£29.99

→Wireless Net users are on Cloud nine

EUROPE'S LARGEST HIGH SPEED PUBLIC ACCESS WIRELESS NETWORK GOES LIVE

MORE AND MORE people can now access the Net on the move following the launch of Europe's largest Wi-Fi network.

The Cloud (**www.mycloud.net**) has begun offering services in 200 locations across the country and aims to have over 1,000 wireless data access points in place by the end of July.

The network covers public spaces in all the country's major cities including London, Manchester, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bristol and Southampton – with the company claiming it's the first in Europe to offer dense, nationwide coverage.

"We are dedicated to bringing together all the elements necessary to make public access Wi-Fi a success in the UK," explained George Polk, Managing Director, The Cloud.

"The Cloud's nationwide network makes Wi-Fi a viable access alternative all over the country."

Hotting up

The company is now looking to tie up deals with service providers to start rolling out Wi-Fi to the masses, and has signed its first deal with BT Openzone. As a result of this collaboration, BT Openzone customers will be able to experience Internet access from all the locations covered by The Cloud's expanding network.

Following the deal, BT Openzone has unveiled a new off-the-shelf Wi-Fi product dubbed 'hotspot in a box', which has been developed in partnership with Toshiba.

BT Openzone customers will now be able to enjoy Wi-Fi access across the UK

BT hopes the product will be snapped up by UK pubs, shops and small hotels, who will then be able to offer Net access to customers as they drink, shop or eat.

Pierre Danon, Chief Executive Officer of BT Retail enthused: "Our progress in growing the BT Openzone public wireless LAN network, added to this latest partnership and our agreement with the Wi-Fi network, The Cloud, means we have decided to bring forward by a year our target for hotspots."

He added: "We are now committing to deliver 4,000 hotspots by summer 2004, rather than 2005."

The absurd degree

VIRUS-WRITING COURSE SLAMMED BY INTERNET SECURITY FIRMS

A UNIVERSITY COURSE for virus-writing has been branded 'irresponsible' by security experts amid fears that it will encourage the spread of malicious attacks.

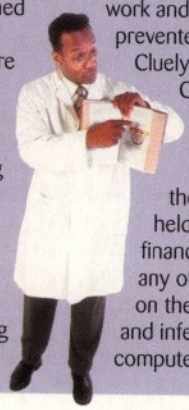
The Computer Viruses and Malware degree at the University of Calgary in Canada (**www.ucalgary.ca**) commences this autumn and is designed to teach students how to develop malicious software like viruses, worms and Trojan horses.

University authorities have allowed virus-writing to be part of the degree after the course professor, Dr John Aycock, convinced them that it will help lead to a greater understanding of how to stop viruses.

Net security companies have attacked the course, however, saying that Internet users could needlessly suffer as a result.

"Should we teach kids how to break into cars if they're interested in becoming a policeman one day? It is simply not necessary to write new viruses to understand how they work and how they can be prevented," said Graham Cluely, Senior Technology Consultant for Sophos Anti-Virus (**www.sophos.com**).

"One wonders if the University will be held legally and financially responsible if any of the viruses written on their course break out and infect innocent computer users."



STAT ATTACK

The Web's weirdest searches

TOP TEN LEAST SEARCHED-FOR TERMS ON MSN.CO.UK. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, ALL ARE GENUINE SEARCHES

1. Walking with woodlice
2. Sausage calories
3. Monkey origami
4. The Queen's Blue Peter badges
5. Black pudding throwing
6. Hedgehog houses
7. Ham sandwich digestion
8. Rules of naked petanque
9. Love of stones
10. UK places with 'Z' in the name

Source: CyberAtlas Internet Statistics (cyberatlas.internet.com)

Fancy a stroll with these fellas? →

Our Data Centre. Your peace of mind.

Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner

Host Europe

Step 1: Select Operating System

Cobalt RaQ

from £74.99 per month
The original "Web-in-a-box" solution.

RedHat Linux

from £99.99 per month
RedHat Linux is the industry standard for web hosting.

Microsoft Windows

from £199.99 per month
Microsoft Windows, the choice of small and large businesses alike.

Sun Solaris

from £199.99 per month
The market leader for reliability and performance.

Co-location

from £99.99 per month
Your server's safe in our Data Centre.

Step 2: Select Specification

RaQ 128
128 MB/20GB/**5 GB Data Transfer**

RaQ 256
256 MB/20.4GB/**20 GB Data Transfer**

RaQ 512
512 MB/30GB/**30 GB Data Transfer**

RaQ 550 256
256MB/40GB/**20 GB Data Transfer**

RaQ 550 512
512MB/2x80GB/**30 GB Data Transfer**

Entry
Intel Celeron 1Ghz/128MB/40GB/
10 GB Data Transfer

Professional
PIII 1.13Ghz/256MB/60GB/
20 GB Data Transfer

Ultra
PIII 1.266Ghz/512MB/80GB/
30 GB Data Transfer

Ultra II
2xPIII 1.4Ghz/512MB/2x18GB SCSI Hard Disks running RAID 1/
35 GB Data Transfer

Enterprise
2xAMD Athlon 2Ghz/1GB/4x36GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID 5)/**55 GB Data Transfer**

Enterprise Xeon
2xIntel® Xeon® 2 Ghz/2GB/4x72GB SCSI Hard Disks (RAID5)/**80 GB Data Transfer**

Advance
2xUltra Web Servers/Ultra II Database & Ultra II Mail Server/**100 GB Data Transfer**

Corporate
3xUltra II Web Servers/Ultra Mail Server/ Enterprise Database Server/
250 GB Data Transfer

Corporate Advanced
4xEnterprise Web Servers/Xeon Database Server/Enterprise Mail Server/
400 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 128
500MHZ/128MB/40GB EIDE/
20 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V100 1GB
500MHZ/1GB/2x40GB EIDE/
30 GB Data Transfer

Sun Fire V120 1GB
650MHZ/1GB/36GB Ultra SCSI/
40 GB Data Transfer

Sun Enterprise
2x450MHZ/2GB/2x18GB Ultra SCSI/
100 GB Data Transfer

Co-location
Your server's safe and secure in our Data Centre. Choose from a range of data transfer (bandwidth) per month and benefit from 24/7/365 unlimited technical support.

Co-location Pro
Half rack of 20 U's of 19" rack server space/15 100 Mb Switch Ports /15 power sockets/up to 30 IP addresses/
45 GB Data Transfer

Co-location Ultra
Full rack of 40 U's of 19" rack server space/23 100 Mb Switch Ports /23 power sockets/up to 60 IP addresses/
70 GB Data Transfer

Step 3: Select Security

Firewall
only £100 per month

Protect your machine from unwanted visitors. Web based control panel allows you to add rules and deny undesirable visitors.

Advanced Systems Monitoring
only £30 per month

The ultimate tool for knowing how your server is operating. Pre-empt critical failure and minimise server downtime with messaging via e-mail or SMS.

Backup
Daily - only £120 per month
Weekly - only £60 per month

Running databases, holding customer information or involved in e-commerce? If your answer is "yes" then order backup now and benefit from free restores if required!

Plus Package
only £199.99 per month
(Save £600 per year)

Firewall, Daily Backup and Advanced Systems Monitoring bundled to save over £600 per year! The complete solution to your Web hosting security.

Product Focus: Ensim

FREE!

Free Ensim software pre-installed and ready to run on every Linux and Windows server!

This industry-leading, web hosting platform allows our resellers and customers to manage their hosting environment and administer their server with no technical ability. Ownership of the administrative functions and configuration of your own server will delight your customers, maximize performance and minimize costs. Ensim will transform your Dedicated Server into an easy-to-use, web hosting appliance that's ideal for web developers, designers and single site users alike.

ensim

Free with Linux & Windows Servers

Benefit From

Same Day Setup

Call us and place your order via credit card or direct debit before 4:00 p.m. (Monday-Friday) and we'll have your server up and running on the same day!

State of the art Data Centres

Our UK Data Centres are designed, owned and managed by us. Situated in London and Nottingham, they benefit from the latest security, backup, power and climate control features available.

Customer Charter

Dedicated Servers are committed to providing you with the highest levels of customer service. Covering all aspects of the customer relationship, it's your assurance of world class service.

Current Specials

Internetworks Free Subscription for 6 months!

Dedicated Servers have teamed up with one of UK's leading Internet magazines, Internet Works, to bring you a great offer. Purchase any dedicated server from our range and receive a free six months subscription.

Pre-Pay Bonus Pack

A huge bonus if you take out any dedicated server with a value of £2000 or more and pay for the year in advance. Each pack includes 5 leading books on your chosen operating system, that will help you get the most out of your dedicated server; as well as great Host Europe merchandise.

Step 4: Relax with...

FREE AND UNLIMITED Technical Support

Unlike most of our competitors we do not charge for technical support or aftersales service. Available with every Dedicated Servers product, you can call or e-mail our support team on an unlimited basis, 24/7/365.

Service Level Agreement

Standard SLA:
Our Industry leading SLA is your guarantee of a totally reliable service. We'll pay you if it's not! Benefit from 99.9% connectivity, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth and a price freeze-forever!

Advanced SLA:
Specially tailored for Enterprise level services and above, the Advanced SLA is perfect for mission critical sites. Backed by a money back guarantee, benefit from 99.999% connectivity, two hour hardware resolution, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 content on ratio on bandwidth, a price freeze and a personal Account Manager.

Step 5: Contact Us

t: **0870 333 0877**
e: **sales@dedicated-servers.co.uk**
w: **www.dedicated-servers.co.uk**

We constantly monitor the competition and know we offer the best value, feature-for-feature dedicated hosting in Europe. We are after all, the generic name associated with scalable, secure hosting. We will beat any like for like quote ..try us!

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Our Data Centre. Your peace of mind.

Dedicated Servers

Prices exclude VAT @ 17.5% and setup where applicable. All trademarks acknowledged. E&OE

News

shorts

→ In a throwaway generation is nothing sacred? Well not DVDs, that's for sure – Disney and Flexplay are set to launch disposable ones. It's all part of a strategy to save the rental industry and counter piracy. Known as EZ-D, they arrive sealed in special packs, and once opened are only usable for 48 hours. After that you just bin them or recycle.

→ A £4million nature resource has just been launched online. 'ARKive' is a vast collection of rare material including audio and film clips of endangered species. Researchers are offered free access to some incredible footage that includes the last known sightings of the Tasmanian tiger and the golden toad. Partly funded by the lottery, the site aims to help wildlife species survive.

Net watch

INTERNET FREEDOM'S **CHRIS ELLISON** MONITORS THE LATEST ONLINE DEVELOPMENTS

THE FIRST BRITISH trial for aiding suicide over the Internet came to a halt last April when the defendant killed himself. Louis Gillies was accused of making a pact with Michael Gooden via a site called Alternative Suicide Holidays. It was set up in 1987 to discuss methods and reasons for suicides but describes itself as a "partial sanctuary where people can discuss suicide openly in an atmosphere which is not condemnatory of suicide, as much of western culture is". The site insists it doesn't encourage suicide, but does not dissuade people either.

"DEPRESSION DOES NOT MEAN WE SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THE RIGHT TO FORM OUR OWN OPINIONS"

Suicide sites have long been the subject of criticism. Many people argue that they can push people over the edge when they are depressed and should therefore be banned. Some people attempt a more 'politically correct' view and argue that suicide sites should be forced to present the opposing view with links to the Samaritans.

There is something very important at stake here and that is the ability of people to make up their own minds. Certainly some people are mentally ill and cannot be trusted to make their own judgements in general. Shutting down sites is a poor substitute for the sort of assistance this kind of illness requires. For the rest of us, even depression does not mean we should be deprived of the right to form our own opinions. Once we allow ideas to be suppressed for 'our own protection', we all lose a fundamental democratic freedom. Worse still, we all end up being treated as if we were mentally ill.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on ***campaign@netfreedom.org****. The campaign's Web site is at* ***www.netfreedom.org***

→Last rites for Web sites?

STANFORD SCHOLAR RECKONS IT'S A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE CURRENT INTERNET CLIMATE WILL SIX FEET UNDER, PUSHING UP THE DAISIES

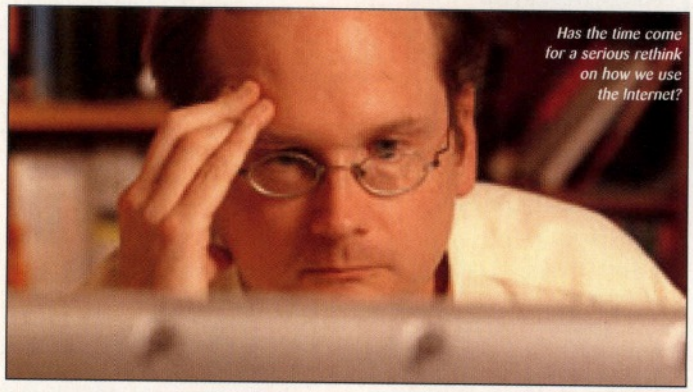
THE INTERNET AS we know it is 'dying'. At least, that's the verdict of Lawrence Lessig, a law professor from Stanford University. Lessig, already a cult figure for technophiles with his outspoken views, has warned about the implications of the Internet being swallowed up by cynical corporations.

His comments are a reaction to relaxed media legislations that could see the largest US outlets within the grip of a far smaller ownership base. This has already sparked outcry from several quarters, particularly former FOX Executive Barry Diller, and could see mass media subjected to control of almost Orwellian proportions.

The professor goes on to highlight wider implications for the information community, where sacred virtues of free speech, thought and opinion would be compromised: "When the content layer, the logical layer, and the physical layer are all effectively owned by a handful of companies, free of any requirements of neutrality or openness, what will you ask then?"

It comes at a time when Web users are becoming increasingly disillusioned by an Internet already suffering at the hands of commercial opportunism. The influx of spam has seriously tarnished email's reputation, be it at home or at work, with browsing equally afflicted by pestering pop-up adverts.

An Internet that promised to be a saviour for the information age may not be dead and buried just yet, but perhaps the imagination behind it is due a timely resurrection.



Has the time come for a serious rethink on how we use the Internet?

Hoax of the month

MANUFACTURER PERFORMS U-BEND ON ILOO

IN A DRAMATIC bid to save face, Microsoft has claimed that the suspected hoax product 'iloo' was genuine all along.

Dubbed also as the first 'www.c', a press release detailed plans for bringing MSN access to portable toilets. The immediate response was that the 'big M' had found a sense of humour, claiming that it was all part of its strategy to get more people logging on.

Encased in a large plastic booth, the bog would feature a wireless broadband connection, keyboard and plasma screen and would be making appearances at top UK festivals this summer. It was rumoured that special bouncers would prevent surfers 'abusing' the facility. An external screen and keyboard would also be provided for those impatient downloaders waiting in line.

MSN UK's spokesman Matthew Whittingham said: "It's a bit of fun, and it allows younger age groups access to our key services, like Hotmail and MSN Messenger, in a fun and interactive way."

Following a later admission that the idea was indeed a joke, the software giants claimed it did have plans for the Net netty after all. However, for the time being Microsoft has conveniently washed its hands of iloo and flushed any reference to the bogus bowl from official sources.

Just a 'flush' in the pan: it seems Net users still have to leave the Net at the toilet door

Net dates a sure thing

ONLINE FIRST DATE SHENANIGANS

ONE OF THE leading Internet dating agencies, email4love.com, has conducted a revealing survey among its membership base.

The site allows anyone who is looking for love or relationships to register their details and browse for potential matches. According to the publicised findings, 59 percent of Web daters who took part claim they would "consider bonking" someone they'd met via the service on the first date. This was apparently attributed to the possibility of chatting a few times and therefore knowing the person, although 71 percent did state a desire to find more long-term commitment.

→ The fashion world has been electrified by the news that charged jackets are to hit the high street. Named 'exo-electric armour' the women's coat is the latest development in wearable defence systems. Powered by a 9-volt battery, the garment delivers a nasty shock to any assailant. Initial feedback has been positive and it should go into production by the end of the year.

→ To coincide with its cheeky TV campaign, Phones4u has unveiled a new risqué site. Just like the star of their new 'plaster' ad you can find yourself the perfect plastic partner within a few clicks. A series of innuendo-tinged questions helps to tailor your doll, so head to **www.dollsoho.com** for a look.

Your new flexible friend
CAMBRIDGE,Mass.--September 17, 2001--E Ink Corporation, the leading developer of electronic ink technology for paper-like displays, today announced the opening of a flexible microelectronics facility in Woburn, Mass. The 9,500 square foot building will house E Ink's Microelectronics Technology Group.The group will develop microelectronics,

Read all about it

PAPERS LITERALLY BEND THE TRUTH

THE CONCEPT OF digital newspapers could soon be a reality after the development of ultra-flat flexible screens.

Scientists at the E Ink Corporation, Massachusetts, have pioneered the bendable monitors that can display resolutions like a typical laptop. Made from foil-mounted transistor circuitry and measuring less than 0.3mm thick, the screens have additional implications for digital clothing development.

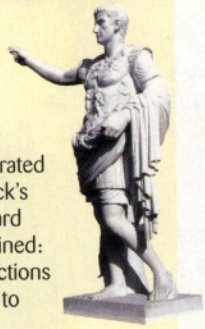
They work by supplying positive and negative charges through a film of electronic ink. Millions of microcapsules of pigment are then charged, with the opposing voltages causing them to rise to the surface, or fall. These patterns can be used to form text or simple images.

Currently the technology is only capable of rendering black text on a white background, although there is no visible loss of quality when the screens are bent. Many believe that this technology could see paper-based media replaced by reusable digital alternatives. Unfortunately these particular screens would need to be bound or hinged.

However, it may not be too long before you'll be browsing the Web on a T-shirt or sending emails from your jeans.

Magic I, Claudius

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS ROMANS COULD HAVE BEEN THREE-DIMENSIONAL PIONEERS



POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO what the Romans actually did do for us could now include the invention of Virtual Reality.

Archaeologists and historians at Warwick University have uncovered intriguing wall murals that the people of Pompeii used to wow guests. The belief is that the primitive paintings deliberately use 3D effects which are not too dissimilar to those employed in contemporary VR.

Using a Greek painting technique known as 'perspective scenic', the Romans would render elaborate theatrical environments within their homes. This would then allow them to experience the thrill of watching a performance just like a member of the audience. Researchers have since been using the grandiose graffiti as detailed blueprints for converting their depictions into computer-generated models. Warwick's Professor Richard Beacham explained: "The reconstructions enable viewers to step into and navigate ancient stages".

Carried out as a joint project between the University's e-lab and School of Theatre Studies, it is thought that the work will prove invaluable to academics wishing to discover more about Roman culture.

E-lab's Drew Baker concurred: "Theatre was an integral part of Roman culture and the wall paintings enable us to understand theatre, politics and culture during the transition from Republic to Empire."

The search for any centurion helmets with integrated VR goggles continues…

See 3PO?

NEXT-GENERATION ROBOTS MAY SEE

A NEW SHAPE-RECOGNITION system could be the much-anticipated breakthrough in giving robots the power of sight.

Foveola claims to closely mimic the way humans process visual information and is the brainchild of Cambridge-based consultant, Patrick Andrews. The Managing Director of Break-Step Productions, and former student in human vision, insists his work is unique in the way it interprets wider ranges of objects: "Foveola is based on decades' worth of research at Cambridge into how people see shapes. So far, machine vision hasn't taken much notice of what was happening in biology."

The system works by assigning 'mathematical signatures' to the shapes it encounters and therefore only needs to see things once for future recognition. Currently boasting a knowledge base of over 3,000 shapes that include icons and letters, it is hoped that the software could also lead to significant improvements to handwriting recognition technology.

A special demo version of Foveola has been made available over the Web (**www.foveola.com**), albeit in a cruder state – the full product has not yet been distributed for industry evaluation.

This has led to many interested parties, although Wolfram Research's Andrew de Laix is sceptical as to whether the product can actually deliver: "It seems it has possibilities, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It's potentially interesting, but it's got to work."

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Feast your eyes on this lot

Robo-mop

Got problems with greasy ground-in grime? Robo Cleaner does all the hard work so you don't have to. The high-tech device looks set to become every housewife's ultimate fantasy, allowing users to plug on the base unit, choose one of the four preset cleaning programs, tell it how many hours to clean for, and then leave it to it and nip down the pub or up the shops. The trusty robot even empties itself of dust when it's full by returning to the base station.

Product: Robo Cleaner
URL: www.alt-gifts.com
Telephone: 01295 275700

£1,498.99

Mini me

Just when you thought portable storage devices couldn't get any smaller, along come the boffins at Sony and shrink their Micro Vault down to the size of your little finger. The aptly named 'Mini' Micro Vault belies its puny physique and can store either 64, 128 or 256Mb of data, depending on the device you plump for. The tiny storage unit boasts USB2.0 connectivity for high-speed transfers and comes with a stylish, compact cradle for mounting next to your PC or Mac.

Product: Sony Mini Micro Vault
URL: www.sony-europe.com
Telephone: N/A

£TBA

Thanks for the memories

In days of yore, recalling treasured holiday memories used to involve huddling round a slide projector looking at hundreds of shots of old forts, wine cellars and 'picturesque' scenery. Things are getting much more high-tech these days though, and this futuristic prototype from BT links physical objects to digital media to get the memories flooding back. A small scanner reads your mementos or keepsakes, then a separate Web tablet is used to display the associated digital media, be it a holiday photo, wedding music, a family video or a Web page.

Product: BT Exact Digital Media Album
URL: www.btexact.com
Telephone: 0800 169 1689

£TBA

LED zeppelin

This stunning new camera lets you capture all those Kodak moments in superb digital quality to share via the Net with your pals. The LS633 camera is the first to feature an organic light-emitting diode display, which displays bright, sharp images for simpler on-camera viewing and sharing from virtually any angle. The 3.1 megapixel cam also boasts a 3X Schneider-Kreuznach Variogon optical zoom lens, along with a continuous 3.3x advanced digital zoom.

Product: Kodak LS633
URL: www.kodak.co.uk
Telephone: 0870 243 0270

£299.99

Oh my Pod

The iPod caused a stir with Mac fans when it was launched last year, but PC users can now join in the iPod fun as well. Three new versions of the MP3 jukebox sport hard drives of 10Gb, 15Gb and 30Gb respectively. What's more, the player now acts as a portable hard drive, letting you not only store a myriad of documents, but view and use them as well.

Product: Apple iPod
URL: www.apple.com
Telephone: N/A

£248.99

Product: Creative Sound Blaster MP3+
URL: www.europe.creative.com
Telephone: N/A

£39.99

Blast off

If you fancy bothering the neighbours by cranking up 'Enter Sandman' by Metallica on your PC, then this could be the product for you. Creative's latest device becomes the first portable USB Sound Blaster soundcard on the market, and is ideal for those who want superior sound quality but are unsure about opening up their PC. The SB MP3+ is also ideal for laptop owners looking to annoy fellow train passengers with booming tunes.

Textual healing

Allowing you to knock out a crafty email on the way to the office, IXI's latest Sleek Messenger concept could change the way we send messages. The device is no bigger than a London Underground travelcard wallet and allows you to send SMS, MMS and emails using a technology known as Personal Mobile Gateway (PMG). Other PMG devices in the offing from Samsung and Sanyo include a watch that displays your phone caller ID, a pen that doubles as a dictaphone and a tiny phone that can fit into the palm of your hand.

Product: IXI Sleek Messenger
URL: www.iximobile.com
Telephone: N/A

£TBA

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With a great idea and a lot of effort, Dr Greenfingers has shown how to turn a hobby into a Web success

LETTER OF THE MONTH

How does your garden grow?

My brother became a famous BBC TV presenter and now does Bid-up TV. I tried to follow his success by signing up as a redcoat at Butlins, Filey. I formed several pop bands in the Eighties and Nineties, but no luck! Would I ever get that bit of fame? Sure enough, fame came, but not on TV – on the Internet.

In late 1998 I purchased my first computer and went online from my home in Yeadon, Leeds. Being a keen amateur gardener, I went surfing the Web for gardening help and advice. I found that many sites I visited had the information I needed, but were difficult to navigate and seemed to be a bit drab in their designs.

With no experience in Web design and little knowledge of using a computer, I set about creating my very own gardening Web site.

I designed the site on a hospital theme, complete with doctors, nurses and a touch of humour too. This was to make my site fun to visit and stand out from the other Web sites.

A title for the site was needed and, after being told by friends and neighbours that I was a bit of a gardening doctor and had green fingers, I decided not only to name my Web site Doctor Greenfingers, but to also become Doctor Greenfingers himself!

Finally in 1999, I launched the site and registered it with the top search engines. Within months of being online thousands of people had visited the Web site. Month by month the site grew and so did the hits.

Soon after this I received a financial offer of a five-figure sum from an entrepreneur for a share of the Web site. I turned this down. When you have just created a baby you don't want anyone taking it away!

Dave Thompson

It's good to hear your site is doing so well, Dave. Greenfingers.co.uk demonstrates perfectly the concepts that we discuss in this month's cover feature starting on page 22 – namely that you don't always need the flashiest site in the world to make a success of this Web game. Often, the most important thing of all is the initial good idea – and yours was obviously a cracker. We're just trying to work out who your famous brother is, though...

The Greenfingers secret of success: one great idea, some creative ingenuity and a dollop of good advice

In praise of Opera

I would like to disagree totally with the Letter Of The Month in issue 80. In my opinion, Opera 7 is the best browser ever – version 6 was good, but version 7 is the reason I've finally stopped using IE. I have found that it is a little faster at rendering pages, and even a small enhancement to my 56Kb connection is more than welcome.

But speed alone isn't what makes Opera so good for me – it's the intuitive features that make it physically much quicker and easier to use than IE. Tabbed browsing, for one, is nothing new, but speeds up surfing no end. Then there's the search boxes which let you type your query in without actually visiting the search engine. Next, there's the easily accessible additional features – pop-up and image blocking, print preview and more. Skinnable interfaces allow for nice cosmetic customisation, and the actual load time of the program itself is excellent. And I musn't forget the keyboard shortcuts – they are soooo useful!

Granted, I have noticed a few bugs which sometimes cause the program to shut down, but this has happened equally often while running IE, and either way, it may not have been the browser that caused the problem.

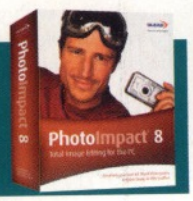
But when Opera crashes (or my laptop battery runs out!), I always have the option on Startup to 'begin browsing from where I left off'. The favourites work similarly to IE, the options available from the right mouse button are much more advanced, and you can even 'Zoom in' to the Web page you are visiting, should you wish to.

The intuitive features of Opera make it much quicker and easier to use than Internet Explorer

WIN A PRIZE

Not only do you get the immense satisfaction of having your letter printed in the UK's fastest growing Internet magazine, but every month one of our letter writers wins a great prize. Yes, if you write in to us at the address above, you stand a chance of winning a copy of PhotoImpact 8, Ulead's envelope-pushing graphics package.

We reviewed PhotoImpact 8 in Issue 74, and loved it so much that we awarded it the coveted *Practical Internet* Star Buy award. Worth a cool £89.99, this is one of the best image manipulation programs around. To find out more about PhotoImpact 8, pop along to www.ulead.co.uk or phone 01327 844755.



Reader's tip

Connection happiness

I don't know about your other readers, but I've got loads of connections on my computer from different ISPs. I tried to use the standard Windows method of accessing different ones, but this proved a bit too slow for me. For better results, I just created a folder on my desktop that contains shortcuts to all of my ISPs. To connect, I simply open the folder then double-click on the ISP icon in question.

Simon Jones

Your letters

Snippets

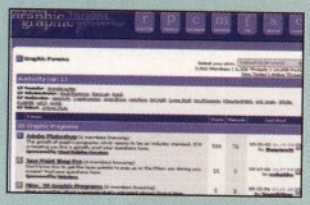
Better design

I read your mag every month and must congratulate you on a top mag! I would suggest though, that you feature **www.graphic-forums.com**, an amazing site with some top designers on there :)

Also, a subject that I feel has been missed is styling. This is becoming more and more popular as the Windows OS system looks aren't exactly good totty!

Thanks for a great mag. Look forward to next issue.

Sherb



Cheers for the shout, Sherb. We'll keep our eyes on the Graphic Forums site for the latest help and advice.

Quick spam

I get 50 to 60 spam emails every single day. Beat that :o(

Alistair

That's a fair boast, Alistair, but can any of you claim more daily spam? If you're drowning in a sea of penile enhancements, sex drive developers and Nigerian business proposals, drop us a line. We'll buy a tin of spam for the person with the biggest verified junk mail count (maybe).

The banner ads don't annoy me, and for such an improvement over IE, I'd be happy to buy it (but haven't yet).

I quote from Leon: "The highly praised mouse gestures work if they feel like it." He suggests this is a bug with the software; perhaps he could take a step back and possibly think that it might not be someone else at fault – it might be him. Tough concept I know, but waggling a mouse is quite an un-precision art... perhaps he wasn't waggling right? ;-)

As you pointed out, the program is also an incredibly small download – which, when you think about it, is amazing, seeing how many extra features it has over IE.

The one thing which I don't like about Opera though, is the fact that, on poorly designed Web sites, a lot of people use non-HTML (or whatever) compliant code, so some sites don't work properly in the browser, only in IE. That's a major bummer, and will normally mean that I take my business elsewhere. But, for some sites with no alternative, I still keep a copy of Internet Explorer 6 well and handy.

All in all: go Opera! Yeah! But non-compliant sites – booooo!

Pete Hartree

For some reason, Opera seems to cause more of you to write in than virtually any other subject (bikini covers excepted, of course). From what we can tell, the browser wars aren't dead, but the main challenger to IE's crown is no longer Netscape, but Opera. We've got to admit that we love Opera, mainly because of its speed, wealth of features and amazing range of shortcuts. What do other readers think? Drop us a line...

Subscription rules

Having spent years hooked on file-sharing clients like Napster and KaZaA, I was as sceptical as the next bloke about paying for music online. What's the point in spending dosh on something I could get for nowt, after all? I started becoming increasingly frustrated at the dummy files that I was downloading though, and began wondering if maybe subscription-based music was okay. After months of indecision, I finally bit the bullet and tried the Freeserve music service you mentioned last month. Fifty downloads for a fiver a month ain't that bad, and I've been impressed so far – in fact, I just get annoyed with all the spyware and false files when I go on KaZaA these days. Who knows, maybe the future of music is in subscription.

Terry Allen

Obviously we never liked file-sharing too much, as we prefer the strictly law-abiding nature of subscription services (honest, guv – all of the file-sharing stuff you see in our tutorials is done with a pained look on our innocent faces).

It does look like subscription is catching on with more and more Net users, however, and the prices you pay now make it possible to survive on a musical diet of nothing more than the rich pickings you get on a monthly subscription.

Are other people turning to it, though? If you've killed KaZaA in favour of costly charges, email us or write in and let us know, and you may see your letter in a future issue of *PI!*

Freeserve's music service gives you 50 downloads for a mere £5 a month

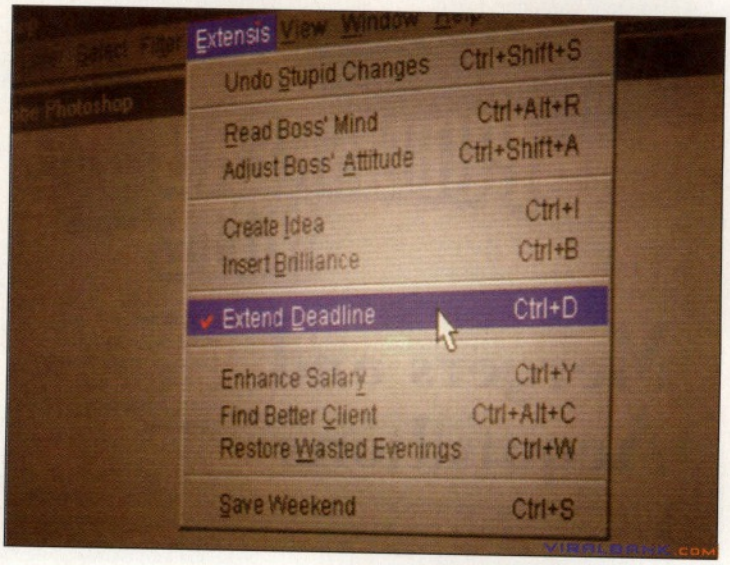
Competition winners

- **Siemens competition (Issue 78)**
  Congratulations go to David Forth of Cleveland and David Champion, who have both won a Siemens M50 mobile phone.
- **Steganos competition (Issue 79)**
  Congratulations to the following people, who have all won a copy of Steganos Security Suite 5: Douglas Brown, Oumoudian R. Ohan, John Kent, Tosin Obassa, Robin Turrell, Nick Cross, Dave Oxley, Mrs P C Jones, Mr S Houghton, Jon Bunston, Paula Coomber, Sam Johnston.
- **Ulead competition (Issue 80)**
  Congratulations to the following, each of whom wins a copy of Cool 3D Studio: Thomas Davies, Chris Cooper, Emmanuel Kamalu, Marc Roman-Gold, Nigel Briggs, Jacqueline Williams, Geoff Smith, John Yorke.

Attachment of the month

You may have seen pics like this before, but we think this is one of the best false interface pictures we've seen. It sums up that feeling you get when your mates are down the pub on a Friday night and you're stuck in the office trying to get your work done. Cheers to Bill Peterson for enlightening us.

Have you picked up a hilarious or strange email attachment? Would you like to share it with your fellow *Practical Internet* readers? Send it to pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject header 'Attachment of the month'. We'll print the best one in the mag each month.



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HOT IDEAS FOR WEB DESIGN

DANNY McALEER SHOWS YOU WHAT MAKES A WEB SITE GREAT AND HOW TO MAKE YOUR SITE STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

There is a proverb that says 'from the tiniest acorns grow the mightiest oak trees', or words to that effect. This is certainly horticulturally accurate, but its inference is even more important. An idea, however small, can be lovingly nurtured into something imposing, bold and extraordinary. From your original site idea can evolve another landmark in the annals of Net history that will last for years and years.

Extending this tree metaphor (bear with us), let's take your average Web site acorn and carelessly plant it in the forest of pages that is the Internet. Left to its own devices, it may get lucky, sprout a little, and have its five minutes of virtual fame in the sunlight before withering away into the darkened recesses.

A more regularly tended, carefully planted acorn on the other hand, has a better chance of growing into something special. Your wee Web site could develop into the next eBay, Amazon or Friends Reunited. It doesn't necessarily take loads of money or armies of developers and designers to achieve this seemingly impossible goal, merely consideration of a few simple and often plain common sense techniques. It's these techniques we'll be exploring (without any more tortured tree similes) in this feature.

PLANNING

Before cashing your venture capitalist cheque and thrashing out a few HTML pages, you must spend time planning your site. It's perhaps the most important part of a Web page and yet is often overlooked, or comprises little more than a quick sketch on the back of a used fag packet. Begin by thoroughly researching your target demographic, and finding out if there is any competition for your site idea. These aspects will, to a certain extent, influence parts of your design (such as colour themes, aesthetic appearance and functionality), and the content of your site.

Pencil and paper are still the best tools for site planning. List every last facet you intend to put on the site, from buttons and pictures, through to guest books and product catalogues. By doing this you will be in a better position to evenly disperse the information across your site. You'll also be able to conceive a far more intuitive navigation bar.

Go with the flow

Next, draw a sketch of each page to help you decide how you intend to present the main information (text and picture placement), and what features are to appear on which page. After this you'll need to draw a flowchart to indicate how all the pages will link together. If it gets confusing on the page, chances are that this disorder will translate to your site, and you'll need to rethink the way pages link, or make your navigation bar simpler. It's better to fix your erroneous structure now with an eraser, rather than later after you've begun the process of building the site.

Plan ahead for changes

Factor into your site and page layouts the potential for updates, and the need to regularly update pages. It's all very well designing intricate layouts, but if it takes three hours rather than three minutes to rebuild a page with some updated text, you're going to hate yourself (and probably avoid doing daily updates). Plan your individual pages so that regularly updated elements can be easily edited, or better yet, updated dynamically. In terms of the overall site structure, ensure that you build into your site navigation sufficient resources to expand existing sections, or to add more when it becomes necessary. This might involve a rethink of your navigation bar layout or pop-up menus.

> "If it takes three hours to rebuild a page with updated text, you're going to hate yourself and avoid doing daily updates"

Try to pick a Web host whose server packages can be added to as your Web site expands, such as 1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)

For ideas and tips on planning your site, take a look at Builder.com's excellent Authoring and Site Design tutorials

With your carefully structured site blueprint all ready, you should set about gathering together all the resources you need: photographs and other graphics such as the site logo and buttons, databases, product information, articles and other text elements, scripting tools and any other Web technologies you intend to deploy throughout the site. Do it now and you won't disturb your design stride later on.

Although at this point you're as far from the finishing post as a three-legged horse running in the 3.30 at Chepstow, it's nonetheless pertinent to consider the matter of site hosting. Your intended Web space must not only be big enough, but it must also be reliable, with little or no down-time. In order to support interactive features such as guest books, chat rooms and other sticky elements, your server will need to have CGI facilities. You'll also need to make sure that when traffic to your site gets as busy as the M6 in rush hour, the server host isn't going to penalise you with additional bandwidth charges – or worse still, pull the plug on your site.

Expert tip
First Movies

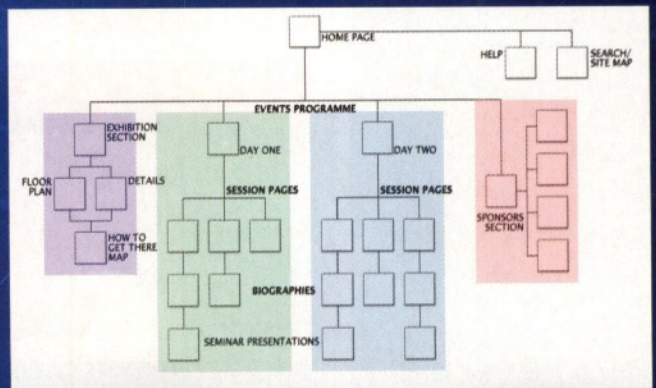
Daniel Light Senior Developer at First Movies gives us the lowdown. "The starting point for the current First Movies site (at **www.firstmovies.com**) was the migration of 50,000 existing users into a new MySQL database. A key objective to create a framework for detailed member profiling to facilitate precision marketing and research. Keeping down system overheads on the delivery of customisable site and newsletter content has been an ever-present theme in our planning.

"With the database in place we wireframed the various components of the site, so that designers would have building blocks when it came to realising the front end. The ambitious site format, incorporating innovative Flash navigation, was only made possible by continuous dialogue between the creatives and technicians involved in the project.

The entire production process took around two months for a team of four, of which almost half was devoted to research and planning. Design and coding was led by detailed analysis of each new site objective."

Map of a Web site

Just as it's impossible to assemble a flat-pack Ikea bookshelf without sufficient preparation and a good plan, so it's true for a Web site. Unless you want your site to have skewed edges and a few 'spare parts', take the time to prepare a good plan and schematic diagram of how the elements all fit together.



Take the time to build a solid site plan before you go wading into Dreamweaver

PULLING POWER

Given that there are billions of pages on the Net, you'd think it would be difficult if not impossible to have a truly unique site. But it is possible, even if the theme itself is not. An analogy of this can be made with music. While in the western scale there are only twelve different notes, within those notes are endless permutations and therefore infinite variety.

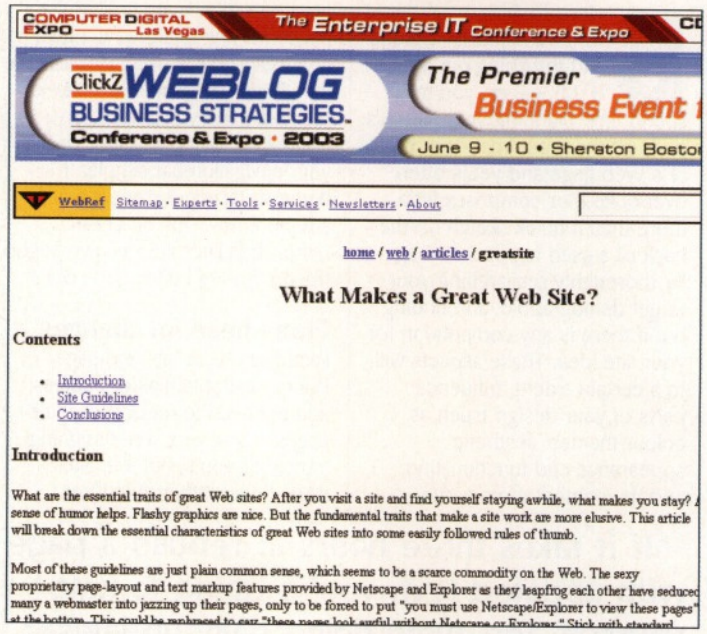
Back to the Web: a good example of commonly-themed sites having unique slants are the journal-parodying TV Go Home (**www.tvgohome.com**) and The Framley Examiner (**www.theframleyexaminer.co.uk**). These and others such as Joe Cartoon (**www.joecartoon.com**) and Atom Films (**www.atomfilms.com**) all have a uniqueness in their ideas that makes them a cut above the rest. They also all have that innate viral quality that makes visitors tell their friends and co-workers about them. So, find some subject matter that people will enjoy sharing, and the word will be spread by others on your behalf.

*Stuck for ideas? The Design Stop (**www.designstop.com**) has a good selection of ideas, planning tools and marketing strategies for your next big Web site idea*

Do something different

It all goes to prove that as well as the idea, it's the implementation and execution of that idea that makes a great site. After all, the premise may be a simple one, or have been done a million times before, but if it's carried off with a touch of panache, quirkiness, laugh-out-loud humour, or authoritativeness, you will be backing a winner.

Think also for a moment about what it is that attracts you to a site when you're browsing the Web. Apart from the subject itself, it's often the services provided which make you choose one like-minded site over another. Services such as free downloads are always popular (the eminence of such places as Download.com are testament to this fact), as are indispensable services like travel timetables, event calendars or newsletters. Other entertainment-based material is just as attractive: music, video, cartoons, games, sounds, jokes, pictures, fiction and non-fictional reference material can all draw visitors, as can a commerce-based site. These latter examples also provide a means of permeating that viral quality mentioned earlier, since visitors can send links to these pictures, or attach them in emails to their friends or work colleagues.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What Makes a Great Web Site?
Contents
Introduction
Site Guidelines
Conclusions
Introduction
What are the essential traits of great Web sites? After you visit a site and find yourself staying awhile, what makes you stay? A sense of humor helps. Flashy graphics are nice. But the fundamental traits that make a site work are more elusive. This article will break down the essential characteristics of great Web sites into some easily followed rules of thumb.
Most of these guidelines are just plain common sense, which seems to be a scarce commodity on the Web. The sexy proprietary page-layout and text markup features provided by Netscape and Explorer as they leapfrog each other have seduced many a webmaster into jazzing up their pages, only to be forced to put "you must use Netscape/Explorer to view these pages"

*If you're after hard and fast rules as to what makes a Web site great, have a read of this informative piece at **www.webreference.com/greatsite.html***

Keep it simple

In terms of the mechanics of your design, by all means employ some of the more exciting facets of Web page construction, such as Flash, JavaScript, ASP and DHTML. But do so not because you can, but because the design dictates it, and its inclusion will not be to the site's detriment. Remember that simple is good. Overcomplicate the design or navigation, and you make it difficult for your visitors to penetrate the gloss and get to the good stuff. Visitors can be fickle folk, too. If your site doesn't pay up immediately, due to the long download times for what your visitor deems to be irrelevant page furniture, his or her attention will be diverted elsewhere. Ultimately, your design should entice, not dissuade visitors. And it should complement, not suffocate, the content.

*In terms of innovative, entertaining Web content, Joe Cartoon (**www.joecartoon.com**) is a prime example*

Expert tip

Hillman Curtis

Hillman Curtis is widely regarded as one of the world's greatest Flash designers and has pioneered the creation of content for the likes of Adobe, MTV, Rolling Stone and Capitol Records. Curtis was Art Director at Macromedia when the company acquired Flash in 1997. You can view his work at **www.hillmancurtis.com**.

"I think it's important first to identify your message, forgetting if you can for a moment your goal of attracting people or getting people to hang out.

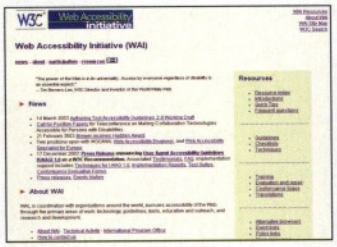
"For me it's always been about voice and whenever I get in a jam on a job or a personal project I find that if I stop for a moment and focus on that one single theme and lose myself in the work for a day or two I end up with something strong.

"I guess what I am saying is that it can be really easy to lose your way designing for results. And with a personal or portfolio site I think the most important thing in the end is your own unique voice and vision. It's much harder than it might seem to unleash that."

USABILITY

Imagine for a moment that your site is finished and everything works well when viewed from your own computer's hard drive. Consider what will happen when it's viewed on someone else's computer over the Internet. If it has a different browser configuration, different screen resolution, even a different operating system, will it work as well? A toy manufacturer or software developer would never send out its wares without thorough testing beforehand, and it should be no different for a Web site.

However, it's not just your site's functionality you need to test, but its usability too. Everything from making your site as easy to operate as possible to ensuring it's optimised for downloading times, is encapsulated in the spectrum of usability. It's about making your site predictable. Jakob's Law of the Web User Experience dictates that 'users spend most of their time on other sites, so that's where they form their expectations of how the Web works'. Therefore, by conforming to the practices of other popular sites, you'll make yours as user-friendly as possible.



If you're looking to find out more about conforming to accessibility guidelines, look at the W3C site's rules and regulations at, which you'll find at ***www.w3.org/WAI***

> "Be prepared to sacrifice some aspects of your design in favour of making the site more accessible"

Usability techniques

This includes simple measures such as using underlines for links, good colour contrast between text and backgrounds (black text on white pages is common for a reason), simple navigation, and eliminating horizontal and limiting vertical scrolling.

It's also about finding a happy balance between creating an experience that as many people as possible can enjoy, and keeping your site's design intact. For example, the matter of type and relative versus fixed size is a contentious issue. In terms of accessibility, it is virtually a sin to use absolute font sizes, since this negates any settings made by the user in his or her browser's font settings. From the designer's perspective, allowing users to twiddle with the font settings is disastrous, because it almost always results in the pages becoming distorted and, perversely, often less readable than before. A simple compromise is to make your default font a reasonable size so that visitors do not need to override your settings. If necessary, you might also want to provide text-only versions of pages that can be more easily interpreted by screen readers, enlarged as necessary or even printed.

Testing, testing

When it comes to testing, you need to be fairly pragmatic, and be prepared to sacrifice some aspects of your design in favour of making the site more accessible. You must also approach testing from the point of view of a new visitor. Don't make assumptions that the user knows where they ought to click in order to find certain elements, or that everyone has a particular browser version, plug-in or screen resolution. If possible, employ others to test the site for you on their own computers, and report back their experiences. Although it might be crushing to receive criticism, you'll be thankful for it later.

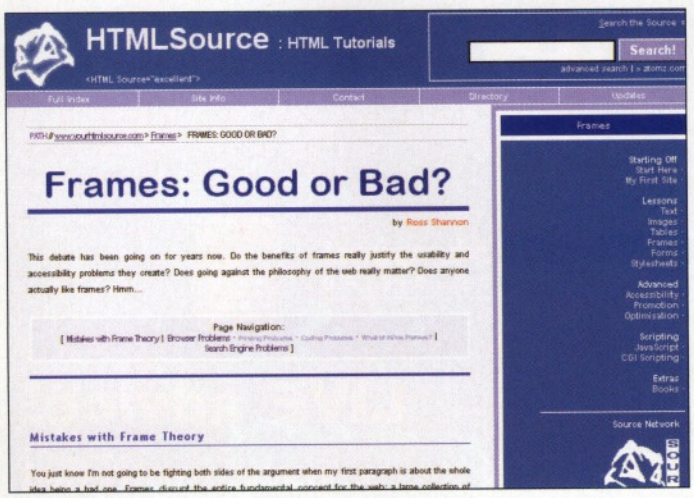
Expert tip
Jakob Neilson

"The two main rules to making a site usable are to answer the customers' questions and to keep it simple.

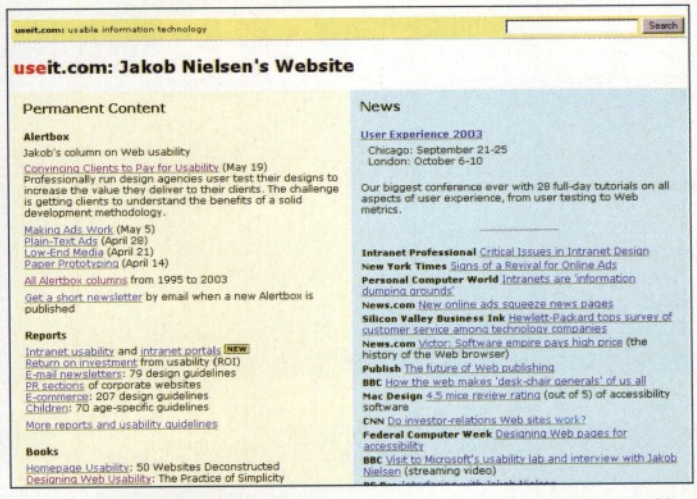
Then, there are plenty of smaller guidelines: for example, my book Homepage Usability lists 113 principles for that single page, and my book on E-Commerce User Experience adds 207 usability guidelines for sites that sell online.

An example of a guideline to do things in ways that users expect is to make search a box on the home page. We know from countless user studies that people look for "the box where I can type" when they want to do a search.

One of the biggest principles can be harder to follow: to answer customers' questions in clear language. Sounds easy enough, but you need to know what customers are looking for on your site and you must be willing to speak plainly and give the facts rather than embellishing the descriptions with thick layers of marketese."


HTMLSource : HTML Tutorials
Search!
Frames: Good or Bad?
by Ross Shannon
This debate has been going on for years now. Do the benefits of frames really justify the usability and accessibility problems they create? Does going against the philosophy of the web really matter? Does anyone actually like frames? Hmm...
Page Navigation:
Mistakes with Frame Theory

Are frame-based sites an abhorrence or a helpful aid to navigating around a Web site? The debate continues at ***www.yourhtmlsource.com/frames/goodorbad.html***



*Although you might not agree with all of the principles outlined in his guide, Jakob Nielsen's Usability site (****www.useit.com****) nonetheless raises many salient points*

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STICKINESS

Your site is out there, and its stunning design, adherence to usability and cool content is attracting visitors in their masses. But it must also possess another quality in order to keep these folk coming back time and time again: longevity. This quantifiable quality is colloquially referred to as how 'sticky' your site is – how much time someone spends 'stuck' there, either in a single session or over a number of repeat visits.

A really sticky Web site shares some parallels with a good soap opera. Not that it's populated with characters who sulk around the place bemoaning their lot in life, but that it creates a community and captivates its audience, coercing them into believing they may miss something important or special unless they pay regular visits.

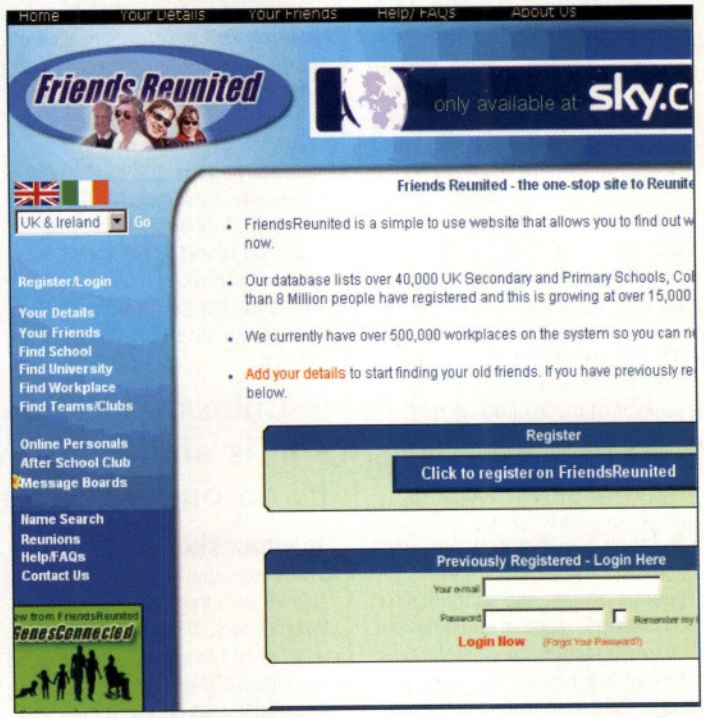
eBay manages to combine community with commerce perfectly, and is one of the best examples of a sticky site around

Eminent examples of sticky sites are eBay and Friends Reunited. Both of these passively incite that fear factor of overlooking something – whether it's that rare collectible or a chance to become reacquainted with some long-lost friend. Both sites encourage repeat visits to ensure the transient nature of its content is not missed. They also share another common characteristic: to enrol visitors in a membership, to engage and encourage visitors to input a part of themselves into the site.

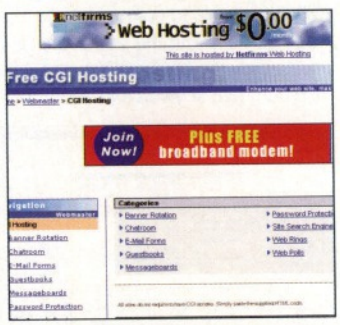
Stick 'em up

There are many ways you can employ the latter tactic in your site. Guestbooks, chat rooms and other such forums actively encourage the visitor to engage in the site. Building a community is certainly a good idea, and this can be further promoted through the use of memberships, whether fee-paid or free, where the user is invited to access exclusive content or offers.

In terms of time spent on a site in one sitting, games and other fun activities are without doubt the best means to leverage that extra few minutes from a visitor. Portals such as Yahoo! have built up a huge array of games that are not only playable individually, but also with other players on the Net. You need not go so far if your programming abilities fall short of games programming. Simple puzzles and quizzes can be created with a little JavaScript or DHTML (many freely downloadable scripts already exist upon which you can base your games), or you could always try your hand at making games in Flash.



One of the major Web successes in recent years, Friends Reunited is an enormously sticky site. You just can't help but revisit it time and time again...



*Netfirms (**globalconnector.netfirms.com/webmaster/cgihosting.html**) provides a good list of links for Web hosts wishing to add sticky elements to their sites, including guestbooks, message boards, chat rooms and forums*

> "Games and other fun activities are without doubt the best way to leverage that extra few minutes from a visitor"

Content is king

However, there is one fundamental element that must never be overlooked. The Net was founded for the dissemination of information, and this principle is a key factor when trying to make your site as sticky as possible. It's the content of your site that will keep visitors fixed on it for hours, or thirsty for regular visits to your fountain of information. And so regular daily updates are imperative. Keep the content fresh, and people will come back for second helpings. But don't discard older postings or articles. Archive your content, and transform your site into an indispensable library of information.

While sites that exist solely for commercial reasons will already have products or services as a lure for visitors, they can also benefit by offering similar sources of entertainment or info as well.

Expert tip: eBay

We spoke to Jennie Reed, Marketing and Communications Manager of the UK division at eBay.

"EBay has a global customer base of 68.8 million and with 16 million items for sale at any one time on eBay, users really can find practically anything on the site. Since its launch in 1995, eBay has quickly grown to become the world's online market place and prides itself on having created a community of traders who all have respect for the site and for other users.

"One of the main reason for the sites 'stickiness' is the trading that occurs on eBay – buying and selling items can become very addictive! Once you start bidding for a much wanted item, it is difficult not to want to stay on the site to monitor whether or not you will end up winning it. Users also want to keep updated on how popular their own items are selling. There are also many community chat rooms on the site where users can speak to each other about trading on eBay, and this community spirit is another reason why so many users spend a great deal of time using the site."

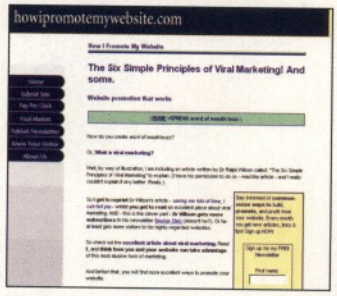
PROMOTION

Whoever it was that said "build it and they will come," had serious delusions of grandeur. Unless you tell folk what your Web site is about and where they can find it, no-one will ever visit. All your hard work and bright ideas will go the same way as the Betamax video tape – long forgotten and rarely lamented. Search engines are the Internet's equivalent of the Yellow Pages, so it's understandable that you should get your site listed on the most popular of these directories.

It's a common misconception however, that saturation is good, and that you should submit your site to hundreds of search engines. The truth is that most people use just one or two of the more popular portals, and so there isn't any intrinsic value in submitting to an engine that is infrequently used. Also, it is actually better to do it yourself than to use an automatic search engine submission tool. It doesn't take too long to visit half a dozen sites, such as Google (**www.google.com/addurl.html**), Excite (**www.excite.co.uk/info/webmasterkit#url**), Lycos (**secure.lycos.de/countries/uk/index.php**), Yahoo (**www.yahoo.co.uk**) and AltaVista (**addurl.altavista.com/addurl/new**), and enter your Web address.

Submit your URL to Google using its Web-based search submission tool. You'll find it at ***www.google.com/addurl.html***

Many of these engines offer paid-for options that thrust your site up the rankings. Try the standard, free submission tool first, and resort to paying when you either have sufficient marketing capital, or are not seeing any return from the gratis service.

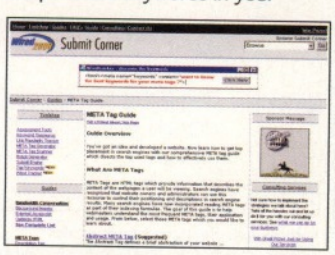


Read more about viral marketing techniques and other promotional tactics at ***www.howipromotemywebsite.com/spread-word-of-mouth.html***

> **Unless you tell folk what your Web site is about and where they can find it, no one will ever visit**

Tag your site

In any case, you'll rarely need to submit more than just your site's Web address. The details and description of your site are siphoned from the meta keywords and description tags on your home page – so make sure you get these right. Without meta tags the search engine will not be able to compare your site's content with the search words entered by the browser. You should use pertinent keywords in your description and site title, but don't overuse or repeat words; it won't make your site ranking any better. It may even exclude your site from being indexed. Also, avoid using classic marketing phrases and common search terms such as 'free' and 'sex' – unless of course this is the content of your site.



A thorough description of the meta tags you need to include in your Web pages can be found at ***www.submitcorner.com/guide/meta/***

But there is much more to site promotion than simply getting your site indexed in a search engine. The object is to get your site URL into the consciousness of prospective visitors, so explore things such as a bookmark button on your site, getting reciprocal links from other sites, and offline options like print advertising. Put your Web address on any product or merchandising you produce, and on every part of your company stationery. Promotional literature sent to the editorial departments of magazines, newspapers and perhaps even radio stations may pay dividends. This kind of marketing is practically free, and it might attract the attention of Web columns such as *Miles Mendoza's Web Site of The Day* on Steve Wright's radio show.

Blast off

Promotion doesn't end when you launch the site. At the very least, you'll probably need to re-submit your URL every six months or so. But folk tend to forget about things, so remind them now and again to come and visit. This could take the form of an irregular newsletter to subscribers (but don't send unsolicited mail), or eCards and other material that visitors can send from your site to their friends.

All of this should make your site name synonymous with the subject material. Aim for something as epoch-making as Google or eBay, and even if you get half way to the summit, your site's popularity will have scaled a massive height. ■

Expert tip: Friends Reunited

Steve Pankhurst of Friends Reunited gives his recipe for promotional success: "We put the Friends Reunited site live in the Summer of 2000. Initially, a lot of time was spent getting the site known by adding it to every search engine that could be found, which was not as easy as it would seem. As the site became more popular, it began to cost us more than just time. We tried to gather some income from the site by getting advertising but the bottom seemed to have dropped out of this market. Instead we used banner swaps with other companies – this resulted in no revenue but more traffic for the site. Then in early 2001 the site was unexpectedly nominated 'Web site of the Day' on the Steve Wright Radio 2 show. Tens of thousands of listeners started to try to log on – our poor little single server just couldn't cope! Around the same time I received an email from Chris Ward at Beatwax asking if we needed any PR support – we've worked with their PR team ever since. We've never spent a penny on advertising!"

When it all goes wrong

For every successful Web site there are dozens of failures, but none gets the attention of the media quite so much as when it involved lots of money, and lots of over-inflated egos, budgets and ridiculous ideas. The highest profile dotcom banana of recent years was the ill-fated, technology-bloated boo.com.

Its principle failures were twofold. Firstly, a large proportion of its potential market was unable to access the site because it overcooked the technology pie. Too many applets and Flash elements not only prohibited many from viewing the site, but the frustratingly slow access times meant that others who could had taken off before it ever loaded.

Its second problem was its business model. If a business is to succeed on the Net, it must also stand up to working in the real world. If anything, the Web customer is more empowered and more critical. As Peter Misek, a business analyst of Chase H&Q put it: "Boo has taught people some very hard lessons about remembering the business plan".

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FIND A NEW JOB ONLINE

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FED UP WITH YOUR DEAD-END JOB? **JAMES THORNTON** EXPLAINS HOW EASY IT IS TO KNOCK IT ON THE HEAD AND FURTHER YOUR CAREER USING RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

Are you tired of interrupting your beauty sleep every morning to get up and trek to the office for a gruelling day of paper-pushing pain, filing frustration and mailbag misery? Does the thought of engaging in endless small talk with your colleagues fill you with gloom? Do you long to plant a thunderous right-hook on your boss's chin whenever he approaches you?

"Thanks to the Net, you now have a genuine chance to make something of yourself"

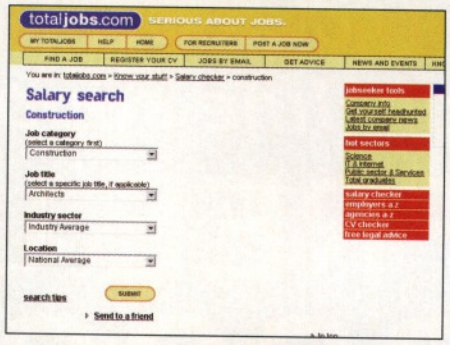
If you've answered 'yes' to any of the above questions then you, my friend, are in need of a change of scene. And before you start trotting out all the old excuses such as, 'I haven't got time to look', 'there isn't anything out there' or, worse still, 'who would want me?' remember that we're now living in the Internet age. Which means that anything's possible, with a minimum of effort required from you.

The days are gone when all your hopes of finding a new employer were pinned on the Jobs section of your local paper, or on phone calls made hastily during your lunch hour to the personnel departments of potential companies. No more standing around like a lemon in the Job Centre either, looking at adverts for pointless jobs such as polishing the leaves in the local park or counting the number of crisp packets dropped in the street on any given day.

Thanks to the Net, you now have a genuine chance to make something of yourself, allowing you to fill your days with work you really enjoy doing. So get out there and see what's about online before apathy gets the better of you – or before you know it, you'll be retiring from the same company you're stuck with now!

There are dozens of sites that are specific to a certain line of work. For instance, JustEngineers.net provides the perfect hunting ground for engineers looking for their dream job

Workthing.com gives you all the tools you need to find the perfect job then apply online. It's Career Paths section is great for getting advice on jobs in your employment sector



The 'Salary Search' on TotalJobs.com allows you to check the average wage for a particular occupation in a certain part of the country, which is often quite an eye-opener

Searching job sites

The first part of your escape plan should be to pay a visit to the Web's major job search sites. Most of the top sites have been established for some years now, and are experienced at giving you easy access to thousands of vacancies in a complete range of employment sectors. So whether you're a fisherman, a butler or a pilot, it's always worth taking a look, especially as they contain job ads that you won't find in your local newspaper.

Monster (**www.monster.co.uk**) is one of the most heavily advertised and well-stocked job databases on the Web, and boasts a long list of features that help make the process of looking for a job much less tedious. This includes 'My Monster', which allows you to set up a free account entitling you to get suitable vacancies emailed to you, let employers search for you and get your career quandaries answered by experts. There's even a facility for creating an online CV and covering letters before storing them online, saving you bags of time.

If you fancy landing a whopper of a salary, why not dip your line into the employment waters using Fish4Jobs (**www.fish4jobs.co.uk**). The site works in conjunction with four large regional newspaper groups so it has access to a good selection of vacancies throughout the country, rather than mainly London-based firms, as is the case with certain other sites. Workthing (**www.workthing.com**) also comes with a huge bank of vacancies, with some excellent advice to boot.

Total recall

Another huge job site well worth a visit is Total Jobs (**www.totaljobs.com**), which lists tens of thousands of available positions at any one time. The site is pretty easy to get around and is split neatly into sections based on industry sector. After picking a category, you get the opportunity to be more specific in your demands in terms of working hours and location. Total Jobs also comes with some useful sundry services, including a 'CV Checker' that lets you find out how good your résumé is simply by answering a few questions about it online. Another eye-opening feature is the 'Salary Checker' which allows you to find out the average wage for a particular trade in your locality. As a result, you may well find that others in your position earn a great deal more than you, causing you to storm in to work the next Monday and demand an instant pay rise or you're off. Then, when your boss tells you where to go, Total Jobs is the perfect place to find something to help make ends meet.

Fish4's job search allows you to pinpoint your ideal role simply by tapping in the type of job you want and the area of the country that you're interested in working in

Despite its name, there's nothing scary about finding a job on Monster.co.uk, and the site has one of the biggest selections of vacancies

Specialist sites

You should get plenty of joy with these job search giants, but if you still haven't quite found your dream job it's a good idea to hunt down a job site that specialises in your area of employment. These often contain gems that don't appear on the bigger sites, as employers know they can use them to get easy access to a core of potential recruits in their line of work.

For instance, if you're technically minded you might try Job Employ (**www.jobemploy.co.uk**) for IT, sales, marketing and retail vacancies. Then there's Just Engineers (**www.justengineers.net**) which, as its name suggests, is the perfect hunting ground for engineers seeking a new employer. Other well-stocked specialist job search sites include Siteworkjobs (**www.siteworkjobs.co.uk**) for site workers and skilled labourers, and Traveljobsearch (**www.traveljobsearch.com**) which lists vacant positions in the travel industry.

As well as these job-specific sites, you'll also find destinations that cater for particular demographic groups. Examples include Gaywork (**www.gaywork.com**), PhD Jobs (**www.phdjobs.com**) and Gradunet (**www.gradunet.co.uk**) which specialise in jobs for homosexuals, intelligent folk and university leavers respectively. It's always a good idea to consult a search engine or directory such as Yahoo! or Google to find specific job sites like this.

Besides catering for job hunters in a specific employment sector, the Web is also home to job sites aimed at particular social groups, such as the self-explanatory Gaywork.com

CAREERS ADVICE

TOTALJOBS' CAREER DOCTOR, JOHN ECCLESTON, GIVES HIS TOP TIPS ON FINDING A NEW JOB ONLINE

1. Don't forget the basics. Just because you're using a Web site to apply for a job, that doesn't mean you can forget the importance of a good CV, covering letter and how to handle yourself at interviews. Most recruitment Web sites offer help and advice on these areas.

2. Research the companies you are applying to join. Having Internet access puts you a step ahead of other jobseekers, as you have one of the best research tools at your fingertips. Look at company Web sites and arm yourself with the right answers to the questions you may be asked in an interview.

3. Register with job sites where possible. It's tempting to simply browse vacancies and apply directly to the companies, but registering with sites maximises your chances of finding the right job. By including information about yourself, you give recruiters the opportunity to browse your details.

4. If a job site offers the option to receive job info by email, sign up for it. Job sites receive new vacancies on a daily basis, so it's easy to miss out on new jobs which have been advertised.

5. Keep a record of contact information for the recruiters to whom you have applied. Job sites often allow you to keep a record of applications you've made, and it's worth making a note of the companies' telephone numbers.

"Having Internet access puts you a step ahead of other jobseekers"

Just finished Uni and getting bored of daytime telly? Why not go out and get a proper job with the help of online services like Gradunet?

Going local

Of course, the age-old means of getting the hell out of the rut you're stuck in is to bury your head in your local newspaper and look for opportunities in the job ads. These days things are much easier, as you can often view these very same vacancies online via your local rag's Web site.

Crafty cockneys will find plenty of reasons to be cheerful at This is London (**www.thisislondon.co.uk**) which lists thousands of jobs in the capital. The site provides a psychometric testing service, which helps you find a job you like and are good at (sitting at home watching telly isn't an option, unfortunately). But if you live outside London don't get all huffy, because the 'This is…' Jobs network covers scores of cities and counties across the land (This is Lancashire, This is Wiltshire, This is Worcestershire, etc.) If you can't find one in your area, simply find the home page of your local paper, which will normally house its own Jobs section.

Signing on

While the term 'signing on' may conjure up misty-eyed visions of halcyon days spent playing PlayStation and watching daytime TV, it has actually taken on a more positive meaning in recent years. The growth of employment agencies has meant that finding and applying for suitable jobs has become a much less tiring experience. By signing on with an agency, you can get someone else to do the donkeywork, then contact you with any positions they think would suit you. While most of them are free to sign up with, they are usually pretty keen for you to find work and will do their damnedest to ensure they pitch you to the right employers, largely because the agency gets a hefty payout when they place someone.

Many of the major job search services such as Total Jobs and Fish4 carry listings from agencies which can be browsed by location or industry. Other sites, like JobSearch (**www.jobsearch.co.uk**) contain dedicated recruitment agency listings, meaning you can be sure of some third-party assistance in applying for any of the roles listed.

However, your best bet is probably to sign up directly with an agency, as they can track suitable jobs for you and put your case forward when applying for those you're interested in. A comprehensive directory of UK employment agencies can be found in the Recruitment section of Great British Pages (**www.great-british-pages.co.uk**). Like the job search sites, most employment agency home pages allow you to send your CV to them electronically, along with details of your requirements.

It's always a good idea to check the online pages of your local newspaper to track down new openings round your way

The perfect CV

One of the most time-consuming aspects of applying for any job is ensuring that your CV is okay and represents all the skills and experiences that make you the ideal person for the role. Unfortunately, this time is often completely wasted in the blink of a potential employer's ruthless eye.

Since the advent of electronic CV distribution, you may think that the process of creating and distributing your résumé is much easier. However, many people fall into the trap of putting together an electronic CV in the same way as a printed one, which is a dangerous game to play. As many job sites will tell you, the rules are different for high-tech CVs. Besides being as short and sharp as possible (no more than one and a half pages long), your online CV must be transferable across different types of software and machines, so it's no use saving it in the latest version of Word. It's much better to store and email your résumé in ASCII or plain text format.

What's more, presentation issues are different for electro CVs. Thus, formatting such as italics, bold and underlining should go out the window as you concentrate on getting the information in order and using the right vocabulary.

SITUATIONS VACANT — more details

FIVE CUSHY JOBS ADVERTISED ONLINE RECENTLY

POSITION
Trampolining instructor

ADVERTISED ON
www.adventurejobs.co.uk

SALARY
£47 per day

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS NEEDED
Full clean driving licence essential, experience of driving a minibus preferable

POSITION
Group Operations Director for leading high street retailer

ADVERTISED ON
jobs.telegraph.co.uk

SALARY
£250,000–£320,000

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS NEEDED
You will have been in a leading board position with a major supermarket or similar retailer

POSITION
Channel 4 news reporter

ADVERTISED ON
jobs.guardian.co.uk

SALARY
Not specified

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS NEEDED
Reporters with a proven track record of success in reporting hard news on television under tight deadlines

POSITION
Video games designer

ADVERTISED ON
www.totaljobs.com

SALARY
£25,000–£40,000

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS NEEDED
Degree in interactive design or related field, or three years' experience designing interactive media for games studios, films or video production

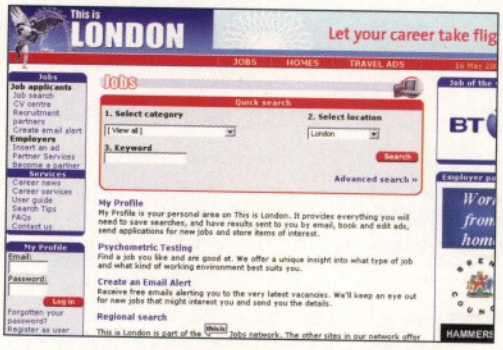
POSITION
Mystery shopper

ADVERTISED ON
www.fish4jobs.co.uk

SALARY
£38–£40 per day

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS NEEDED
Must be able to work flexible shifts, with full driving licence

"Finding and applying for jobs has become a much less tiring experience"



Finding jobs in the capital is as easy as pie and mash with This is London's 'Jobs' section, which boasts its own keyword search and a Psychometric Testing feature to work out the role you're best suited to

JobSearch.co.uk allows you to peruse thousands of vacancies from the UK's top recruitment agencies in a variety of different sectors. You can even specify the type of contract you're looking for

*One of the biggest databases of British recruitment agencies can be found at Great British Pages (**www.great-british-pages.co.uk**)*

Loans are provided by The Governor and Company of the Bank of Scotland, constituted under an Act of Parliament 1695. Head Office: The Mound, Edinburgh EH1 1YZ. Personal Loans, Premier House, Charterhall Drive, Chester CH88 3AN. Typical example for a loan of £10,000 without Creditcare cover - 60 monthly payments of £208.38 commencing 3 months after your loan funds are transferred, total amount repayable £12,502.80 8.9% APR. If you choose the optional courier funds will be delivered in 24 hours. Delivery to outlying areas or for weekend applications may take longer. *An additional £45 will be payable for this service one month before your first monthly repayment. Written quotations available on request. All lending is subject to status. To apply you must be at least 18 and a UK resident. The rate you are offered will depend on credit assessment procedures, your personal circumstances and other related factors. Minimum loan amount £1,000 and maximum loan amount £25,000. Certain purposes of loan may be excluded or have limited repayment periods. Bank of Scotland subscribes to the Banking Code, copies available on request. All information given is correct at the date of printing (June 2003).

ONLINE LOANS WITH SOMETHING EXTRA: DELIVERY IN 24 HOURS.

Not only do we provide a courier service to bring the cheque straight to your door within 24 hours*, but, if you apply online, we'll also give you an instant decision AND an extra low fixed rate from 7.9% APR **(8.9% typical APR)**.

So if you're looking for a loan of up to £25,000, no repayments for the first 3 months and no arrangement fees, you know who delivers.

To apply now, visit our website.

Howard Brown, Sheldon Branch.

www.personalloan.co.uk

BANK OF SCOTLAND Always giving you extra

YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT?!

TEN GENUINE OCCUPATIONS SUBMITTED BY FED-UP VISITORS TO WORSTJOB.COM THAT WE WOULDN'T RECOMMEND YOU APPLY FOR

1. Portaloo cleaner
2. Turd diver
3. Adult video store worker
4. Scabies inspector
5. Prairie dog killer
6. Human guinea pig
7. Peep show janitor
8. Goat caretaker
9. Human remains removal specialist
10. Housewife

Spread the word

In terms of submitting your CV, some job sites allow you to upload it to the Web so that potential employers can come and scout for talent online. The Guardian's Job section (**jobs.guardian.co.uk**) is particularly useful, enabling you to store a profile of yourself, your career interests and your CV on the site. You can choose to post your CV onto one of a number of different industry sectors including media, science, education and IT.

"The Internet opens up a wealth of exciting avenues, and improves your chances of getting a foot in the door"

Another way of getting yourself noticed is to create your own online CV. If you're a skilled Web designer, a dazzling single-page site built in Flash or Dreamweaver is sure to impress – but don't worry if you haven't got the skills, as there are a few sites which let you create an online résumé with ease. GetMyOnlineCV (**www.getmyonlinecv.com**) contains a series of tools for making your own CV page on the Web, which is then hosted free of charge at getmyonlinecv.com/yourname.

If all else fails and you really can't be doing with all this writing and presentation malarkey, you can always pay someone to create a résumé for you. Firms such as the CV Centre (**www.cvcl.co.uk**) and Red CVs (**www.redcvs.co.uk**) will construct a professionally written résumé for you from upwards of £20.

Mum's the word

If you're spending much of your working day on the prowl for a new job online, you won't want your boss to come along and see what you've been up to – or you could be out of work sooner than you expected. However, keeping schtum about your job-hunting needn't involve constructing an elaborate walled partition around your machine with books and folders. By using a combination of common sense and anti-snooping software, you can ensure that no-one is any the wiser about your escapology antics.

Sensible precautions include simple things like emailing job applications via a Webmail account rather than your work email address, and avoiding writing covering letters directly into email messages, by copying and pasting from a word processing package instead.

GetMyOnlineCV.com
Personalised URL: getmyonlinecv.com/your-name-here
Make your perfect CV in minutes using our online tools
Use colours and styles to make a CV unique to you.
No computer skills necesary - Full online help.

Producing an online CV is one of the best ways to advertise your skills to prospective employers. By using services like GetMyOnlineCV.com, you can put together a professional Web-based resume in no time

The Guardian's job search pages are great for tracking down vacancies in the media and the IT industry

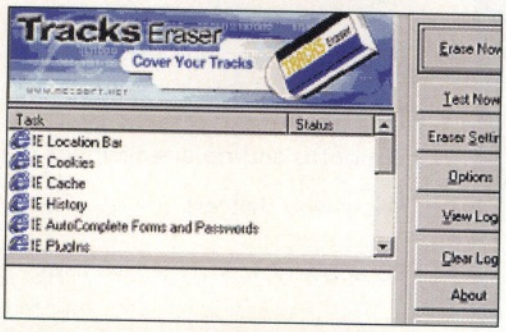
While you can delete your browser history or empty the cache to remove shreds of your online job hunting, a particularly curious boss will be able to track where you've been through other traces left on your PC. As a result, it's worth installing an online privacy application such as Window Washer (available for download from **www.webroot.com**) or Tracks Eraser (**www.acesoft.net**). These programs completely eradicate evidence of your actions by cleaning up cache, cookies, recent documents list, search history, etc.

Seeking further advice

Of course, we can't tell you which jobs to apply for or what your next career move should be. But if you're working out whether to stay where you are or take off for Australia, remember that the Web contains a wealth of sites where you can pick up free advice.

Most of the big online job search sites like Monster, StepStone and Top Jobs (**www.topjobs.co.uk**) come with their own Careers Advice sections where you can pick up tips on the path to follow. TotalJobs.co.uk has its own 'Career Doctor' who prescribes a dose of sensible advice on a variety of career-related problems. Those caring folks at the BBC are also pretty helpful, and the Radio One site (**www.bbc.co.uk/radio1**) has an excellent Work section. This is stacked with info on choosing a job, writing CVs, applying, and what to do when your working life begins to crumble around you.

If you're serious about finding work, the Net opens up a wealth of exciting avenues for you to explore, and improves your chances of getting a foot in the door. It also means you can specifically target jobs you know you'd be good at. Ultimately though, once you're in that interview room you're on your own. Good luck! ■



You don't always want everyone in your office to know that you're looking to get as far away from them as possible, so it's a good idea to clean up traces of your Net activity using a program like TracksEraser

YES! I DID FIND MY DREAM JOB ONLINE...

apply online

When London-based account executive Katie Crowe decided to start looking for another job, she decided to turn to the Net to help her land the role of her dreams. A couple of weeks after signing up with Monster.co.uk she landed a plum position as European PR Executive for video-editing giant Avid Technology. Katie explains:

"I used Monster to conduct tailored job searches on a daily basis, searching for jobs in a certain sector and geographical location. When the job at Avid came up, I immediately knew it was for me. I hadn't been for an interview for nearly three years, so contacted Monster Worldwide to talk to a consultant about interview techniques. He invited me to the Monster office for a mock interview which gave me the practice I needed for the Avid interviews.

"After just two and a half weeks of finding the job on Monster.co.uk, I was offered the position. My role at Avid is not only challenging but also extremely rewarding. As a language graduate, I am able to use my French and Spanish on a daily basis and am working in an extremely exciting industry – film and TV. Matrix Reloaded is one of our customers. Monster not only helped me find the job of my dreams quickly, but actively helped me turn it into a reality."

123-reg.co.uk

Domain Names

~~99p*~~ UK Domains

Check it out yourself

www.123-reg.co.uk

1 Register

It's never been easier or cheaper to have your own domain name!

123-reg delivers a totally automated service with the lowest prices in the World, guaranteed! Stunning price includes:

- Web based control panel • Web forwarding • Change name servers • Holding page wizard
- Catch-all e-mail forwarding • 100 e-mail forwarding addresses • Full domain & renewal management
- Change IPS tags (UK domains) • Change Contact Details • Display and e-mail invoice
- Manage your own DNS • Domain name locking • Affiliate scheme • No transfer out fee

~~99p*~~ UK Domains

Additional services include: Domain Watchers, POP3 and Sub-domains, Pre-register for new TLDs.

2 Build

Build before you buy... risk free!

It's never been as simple or as fast to build a great looking site!

The 123-reg site builder is a clear market leader in terms of features and functionality, having been developed purely with our customers in mind. Exclusive to 123-reg, this new low-cost service allows anyone to build and maintain a professional looking web site in minutes; no knowledge of programming required!

Includes all the necessary tools required to create and update a web site, such as over 100 designs, templates, an intuitive editor, tables, forms and multimedia capabilities. The product is ideal for people and companies who want to establish an on-line presence but don't want to get immersed in development or high costs.

£4.20** per month

3 Host

There's no better place to host your site!

123-reg manages its own UK based data centres, with state-of-the-art security and all the backup facilities you would expect from a market leader. Your site will be hosted on a high-end server and be totally under your control via our easy to use control panel. Choose from two great packages that will keep your web sites on-line...all the time!

Regular:
250 MB for £2.99† per month, 1 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 10 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

Xtra Large:
500 MB for £4.99† per month, 2 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 25 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

from £2.99† per month

American Express · MasterCard · VISA · Switch · Delta · Solo

Part of the Host Europe Group

*Plus registrar registration fee, see web site for full details. **Monthly fee must be paid annually.
† Monthly fee, must be paid annually and excludes one-off setup fee of £9.99. All prices exclude VAT. E&OE

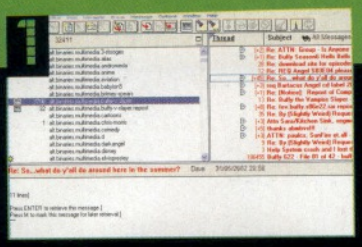
Back to the future

FLASHY INTERFACES AND STACKS OF FEATURES ARE JUST SO LAST YEAR. **NICK SWEENEY** EXPLAINS HOW ALL THE COOL KIDS ARE USING RETRO TECHNOLOGY TO RELIVE THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF THE NET

Ten years ago, an odd little program emerged from a supercomputer laboratory in Wisconsin, to be greeted with a mixture of excitement and scepticism. Its name was 'Mosaic', and it was the first graphical Web browser. The originator of the Web, Tim Berners-Lee, didn't see the need for images on the World Wide Web: he imagined it as a place for scientists to share research papers. Nowadays, though, you can check your email, read and post to newsgroups, or visit Java-based chatrooms, all without leaving your browser. No wonder many new arrivals think that the Net and the Web are the same thing.

For a generation of diehards, however, Mosaic marked the point where things started going awry, as the masses began to infiltrate the Net. Old-timers described the arrival of AOL subscribers to the Net as 'the September that never ended' – a dig at the annual influx of students who clogged up the newsgroups and IRC channels with inane questions and bad attitude. As the Web's multimedia capacity expanded rapidly, many clung on to their old-school, text-only applications and locked down their well-established communities. The cult of low-tech may seem anathema to the evolution of the Net, but with the ever-increasing demands set by hardware and software manufacturers, some users are gladly turning back to the simple life.

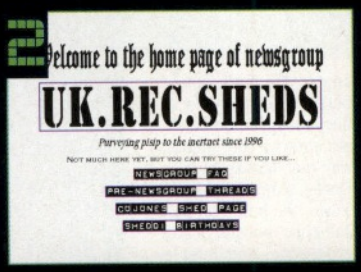
So even if you're happy spending most of your online life in the world of sleek, user-friendly graphical interfaces, it's worth checking out the low-tech Internet for the times when you're willing to forsake a bit of comfort for a lot of speed!

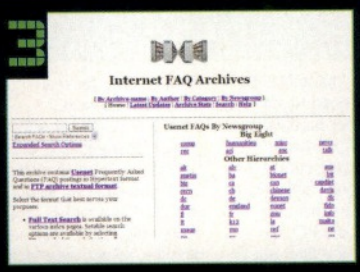


1 *Your first stop on the road to newsgroup heaven should be an app like Agent*

2 *Quirky and funny, UK Rec Sheds is everything that's good about newsgroups*

3 *If newsgroups give you the willies, the Internet FAQ Archives will sort you out*


Welcome to the home page of newsgroup
UK.REC.SHEDS
Purveying pisp to the internet since 1996
NOT MUCH HERE YET, BUT YOU CAN TRY THESE IF YOU LIKE...
NEWSGROUP FAQ
PRE-NEWSGROUP THREADS
COJONES SHED PAGE
SHEDD BIRTHDAYS



Old news is good news

When you consider the state of the Net before the rise of the Web, it's easy to appreciate why most people from those days don't look back with much regret. Searching for files and information was haphazard and unreliable, while taking part in communities meant ensuring that local and remote servers kept in regular contact. In short, being online in the early Nineties was like owning a car in the early 1900s: you had to be an expert mechanic, or learn fast, just to make sure things worked properly.

Why, then, should there be any enthusiasm for low-tech solutions these days, when powerful Web-based services are so tightly integrated into modern operating systems? Well, the communities that survive from those early days tend to be small, well-behaved and knowledgeable, with a high 'signal to noise ratio'. The tools designed for the low-tech era, or even those dating from just a few years ago, are usually more reliable and less reliant upon the latest hardware and software than bulked-up Web browsers or bloated applications. It's easy these days to be lulled into seeking out the newest upgrades for a limited return in terms of functionality – that's why it's useful to step back, shrug off the technology rat-race, and embrace the spirit of the low-tech Net.

Use it wisely

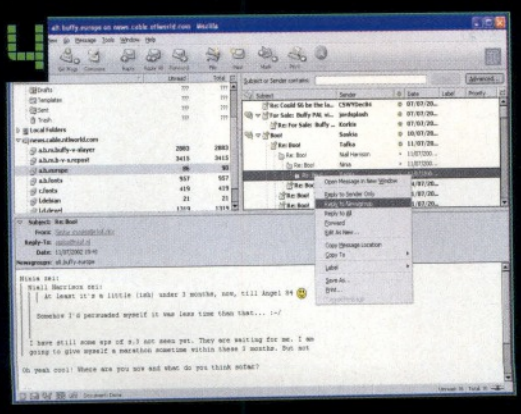
Of all the Internet technologies that pre-date the Web, Usenet newsgroups, born in 1979, has undoubtedly been most successful at resisting obsolescence, in spite of the influx of spammers and the onward march of the browser. Ironically, that's partly because the discussion group network was quick to be embraced by the Web. The DejaNews archive, now incorporated as Google Groups, provides unparalleled access to archives which date back to 1981 – a decade before the Web existed. This has proved a strong reminder to users that *new*sgroups are still going strong, but with the downside that it presents them as a read-only environment. Searching Google Groups is a great way to cherry-pick information from the archives, but usually means that you don't get the benefit of participating in discussions.

Installing a dedicated newsreader such as Forté Agent (**www.forteinc.com**) greatly improves your Usenet experience, but you can see the difference simply by using the newsgroup features on a mail client such as Mozilla Mail or Outlook Express. You can 'subscribe' to the groups that interest you most, view messages as 'threads' and check headers before downloading articles, filter out spammers and nuisance posters, and download files from the 'binary' newsgroups that Google doesn't index. Most ISPs provide a healthy selection of groups on their 'newsfeed', even if they don't advertise it too much any more to new customers – and if you're out of luck, there are plenty of public news servers.

Subject matter

What's the selling point of newsgroups? Simply that they remain the best place to build topic-orientated communities, packed with expertise and timely advice. (There's also the small matter that newsgroups remain one of the best ways to distribute copyrighted material under the noses of the authorities, but we won't go into that.) Many newcomers think of Usenet as a hangout for diehard geeks, and it's true that computing remains the most prominent topic of discussion. But with thousands of other subjects, covering everything from fly-fishing to bungee-jumping, book groups to support groups, they remain an unmatched repository of human intelligence, much of it built upon personal experience.

When group members have spent years reading and posting to particular newsgroups, it's no surprise that many are reluctant to dilute the community by migrating to Web-based (and ad-infested) forums just for the sake of it. Newsreaders offer a consistent, powerful interface by comparison with browser-based discussions, and the low overheads of the NNTP protocol allow users to read and post from simple text-based clients or their swanky graphic cousins, depending upon their circumstances.



4 *Even browsers like Mozilla are getting in on the newsgroup act – there's a rather nifty newsreader bundled with the open source client*

Top ten obscure newsgroups

1 **alt.nuke-the-usa**
Home of some of Usenet's celebrity posters, this newsgroup is full of playful banter – usually against Americans.

2 **alt.tv.dinosaurs.barney.die.die.die**
The official newsgroup of the worldwide jihad against the purple TV terror.

3 **talk.bizarre**
One of the oldest newsgroup communities, witty, playful and downright silly at times.

4 **uk.rec.sheds**
Surprisingly little to do with sheds, but lots to do with very dry British humour.

5 **alt.religion.kibology**
James 'Kibo' Parry is the original Usenet star. This newsgroup is devoted to his cult of personality.

6 **alt.bigfoot**
Bigfoot might exist, but he's strangely absent here. Instead, you'll find Canadians talking about moose.

7 **alt.adjective.noun.verb.verb**
A group in which all posts must be composed according to the grammatical instructions in its title. Plain strange.

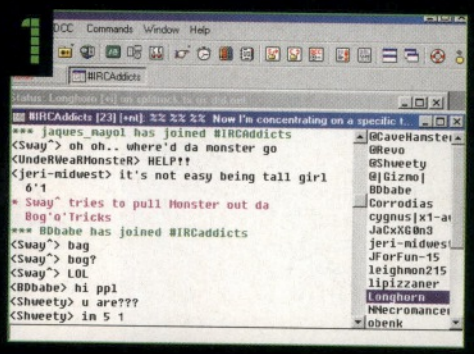
8 **alt.startrek.klingon**
Trekkies discuss the Klingons. Often in the Klingon language. Some people just have too much free time.

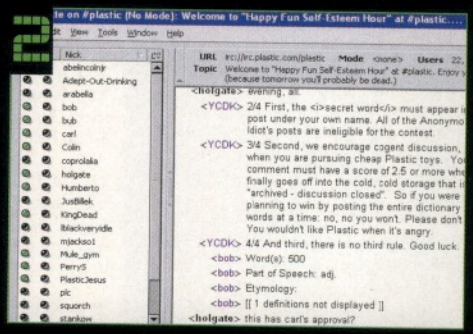
9 **alt.life.sucks**
Not for optimists. Fancy wallowing in misery? Here's the place to do it.

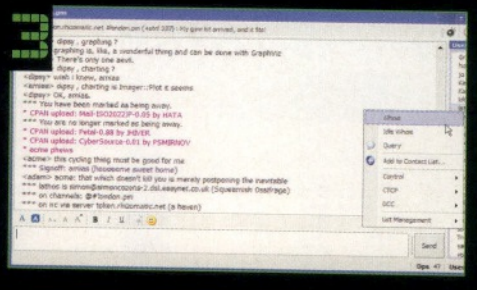
10 **alt.swedish.chef.bork.bork.bork**
Dedicated to the chicken-obsessed Muppet and his distinctive accent. Hurdy vurdy vurdy!

What you need

If you want to party like it's 1993, you'll need to start with the proper hardware. Check the skips in your nearest recycling centre, or look for schools, colleges and businesses that are throwing out old PCs. A 486 will suit you fine, but if you're feeling flush, a new-fangled 'Pentium' CPU will do the trick. As for memory, look for 4Mb of RAM or 8Mb for real power users. Next, software: install Linux if you're feeling geeky, MS-DOS if not, and Windows 3.1 if you can't do without your GUI and mouse. You'll need a high-performance monitor, so ask your local library if it's getting rid of its old terminals (VT100 compatibility is essential here) and pick out a couple, the dustier the better. Orange-on-black is fine, but green-on-black will impress your friends with that 'Matrix' look. Finally, a modem – the slower the better for that authentic 'bulletin board' experience. And don't let those fashion victims convince you that 56Kb or 'broadband' is the way to go! USB cables? Pah!




#plastic (No Mode): Welcome to "Happy Fun Self-Esteem Hour" at #plastic....
File View Tools Window Help
Nick
URL irc://irc.plastic.com/plastic Mode <none> Users 22
Topic Welcome to "Happy Fun Self-Esteem Hour" at #plastic. Enjoy y (because tomorrow you'll probably be dead.)
abelincolnjr
Adept-Out-Drinking
arabella
bob
bub
carl
Colin
coprolalia
holgate
Humberto
JustBillek
KingDead
lblackveryidle
mjackso1
Mule_gym
PerryS
PlasticJesus
plc
squorch
starikow
<holgate> evening, all.
<YCDK> 2/4 First, the secret word must appear i post under your own name. All of the Anonymo Idiot's posts are ineligible for the contest.
<YCDK> 3/4 Second, we encourage cogent discussion, when you are pursuing cheap Plastic toys. Yo comment must have a score of 2.5 or more wh finally goes off into the cold, cold storage that i "archived - discussion closed". So if you were planning to win by posting the entire dictionary words at a time: no, no you won't. Please don't You wouldn't like Plastic when it's angry.
<YCDK> 4/4 And third, there is no third rule. Good luck
<bob> Word(s): 500
<bob> Part of Speech: adj.
<bob> Etymology:
<bob> [[1 definitions not displayed]]
<holgate> this has carl's approval?



1 *The original graphical IRC client, and still the best, mIRC has been letting punters into the world of chat for years*

2 *As new programs like ChatZilla pop up, the popularity of IRC chatting could be set for a whole new resurgence*

3 *Nowadays, you don't even need a dedicated client, thanks to the built-in joy that you'll find in the Mozilla browser*

Channelling IRC

Some of the same principles which keep newsgroups active apply to the continued survival of Internet Relay Chat, in spite of the growth of Web-based chatrooms and instant messaging clients over the past five years. Born in Finland in 1988 as an attempt to combine the real-time interaction of single-site bulletin boards with the distributed networking approach of Usenet, IRC still offers users a robust, worldwide network of servers. By creating networks of intercommunicating chat servers dotted around the globe and encouraging users to log into their nearest server, IRC handles bandwidth more elegantly than a single centralised forum such as the Java-based applications which run in your browser.

mIRC and the mechanics

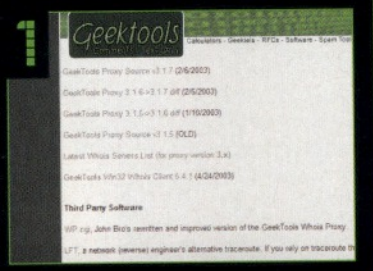
Nowadays, most IRC users running Windows use graphical clients to access their favourite networks and channels, but even these programs tend to be small, low-tech affairs. Head and shoulders above the rest is mIRC (**www.mirc.co.uk**), first released in 1995, which owes its success to being both simple to use and highly customisable. However, many 'newbies' stumble into IRC these days by accident, thanks to the programmers of Mozilla and Trillian, both of which provide IRC clients with a familiar, user-friendly interface.

Since IRC is a real-time chat network, rather than an archived discussion forum, it can be harder to sense an ongoing community than with newsgroups. However, the longest-serving and most popular channels, especially those with a geekish tendency, remain tightly knit and friendly. This can be daunting for new arrivals, as IRC has a reputation for being a hostile environment for the uninitiated; indeed, a glance at the history of the various network splits and feuds might suggest that the people in charge are pretty fractious. However, if you avoid the internal politics of the IRC junkies, watch your netiquette and stick to the channels that cover your favourite topics, you're likely to be greeted with open arms by the 'operators'. After all, many IRC users regard themselves as a text-based resistance movement for the original spirit of the Net, so any new recruits are welcome!

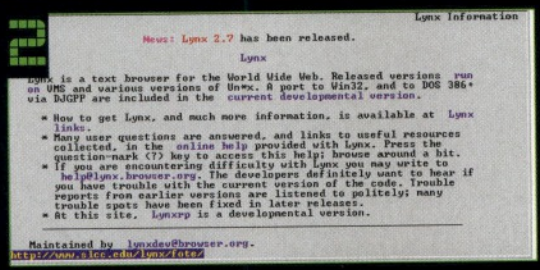
Golden oldies

Like the readers of newsgroups, IRC continues to thrive in a low-key fashion because it retains the loyalty of its older users. And those 'dinosaurs' of the Net perpetuate some of its best aspects – that combination of expertise and generosity that helps people through their problems, whether with a dodgy graphics card or a serious illness.

One of the early defining moments for IRC came with the first Gulf War in January 1991, when users around the world logged in and shared the reports being broadcast on their local TV and radio stations, in an attempt to build up a broader picture of events. This capacity for collective reporting has been supplanted, for the most part, by the Web, but it reflects a collaborative spirit among IRC users that continues to distinguish the network. Even now, expatriate football supporters can use IRC channels to keep up to date with matches in progress where streamed commentary isn't available. One (or more) home-town user with access to local radio will type up the action, and everyone else 'listens in', providing virtual cheers and the occasional ironic comment on the referee. That spirit isn't easily matched, online or off – and it's a big reason why IRC can be both low-tech and highly rewarding.



1 *All the tools and tips you need for geekdom can be found at GeekTools*



2 *If IE moves too slowly, give Lynx a shot. It looks horrible, but it'll sort you out*

Keeping it simple, but not stupid

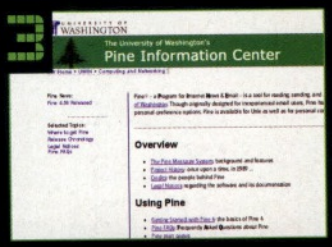
When poking at the low-tech underbelly of the Net, Usenet and IRC are the most obvious examples of technologies that have resisted the onward march of the Web browser. However, there are other retro-minded solutions which plenty of users call upon from time to time, especially if they're sick of the relentless cycle of hardware and software upgrades. The success of the Linux operating system, for instance, comes partly from its ability to breathe new life into older PCs that have either been excluded from Microsoft's vision for the future, or simply make Windows XP run like a Lada Riva. This isn't because Linux is outdated or obsolete – in fact, its developers got first dibs on the new range of AMD chips – but because it scales much better for older hardware. So while your antique PC might not have the clout to run the latest shoot-'em-up, there's no reason to put it out to pasture. By installing a user-friendly application such as Lycoris (**www.lycoris.com**), you can turn it into a perfectly good machine for checking email, browsing the Web or working with documents.

P-pick up a penguin

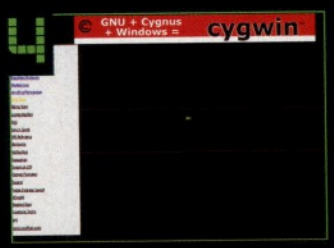
Once people start using Linux or have experience of UNIX systems through work or college, it's common to see a change in attitude away from the 'feature creep' associated with Windows applications. The UNIX mentality is typically known as 'Keep It Simple, Stupid', or KISS for short: develop small programs which carry out specific tasks, and hook those programs together in order to get your work done. While this approach is normally associated with the work of programmers and the servers that run the backbone of the Net, it's finally undergoing a renaissance among desktop users, thanks to operating systems like Linux, and more recently Mac OS X, which put the text-based command line back within reach for tasks such as file management and editing. Windows users, too, can benefit from this by installing the Cygwin package (**www.cygwin.com**). While the learning curve for UNIX commands is a little steep, it's often quicker and easier to copy, move or rename files from a command line than with the point-and-click, drag-and-drop mouse interface. Similarly, millions of users continue to swear by text-only email programs such as the UNIX-based Mutt and the Windows-compatible Pine (**www.washington.edu/pine**).

Text match special

You'd be right to argue that text-driven computing goes against everything that's made the PC a commercial success, but the aim isn't to supplant the GUI but to augment it. If you're in a hurry, and a graphics-heavy Web page is taking too long to load, there's no harm in being able to fire up a text-only browser such as Lynx (**www.fdisk.com/doslynx/lynxport.htm**) to get the info you need. If your email app isn't working or you're stuck in a remote part of the world with only Windows 3.1, life becomes a lot easier if you know how to Telnet into port 110 of your ISP's POP server and check your messages by hand. If mail isn't reaching its destination or a site is inaccessible, it's useful to be able to run a 'traceroute' from the Windows command prompt or through an app such as AnalogX's HyperTrace (**www.analogx.com**) to see where all those data packets are being lost.



3 *Pine has been going for years, but it still has a dedicated army of followers*



4 *Want to get your hands dirty with some Unix coding? Turn to Cygwin...*

Retro-tech timeline

START HERE

1970 Birth of ARPANET

1973 First emails sent from USA

1976 Queen sends first email to originate from the UK

1979 First USENET newsgroups created to link two North Carolina universities

1988 IRC created in Finland

1990 ARPANET evolves into 'Internet'

1991 Invention of 'Gopher', the hyperlinked precursor to the Web. First Linux kernel released

1992 First text-based Web browsers appear

1993 Mosaic, first graphical browser, released. Eudora mail client launched

1994 Netscape Navigator released

1995 Internet Explorer 1.0 launched alongside Windows 95. mIRC released

1996 ICQ, first true Instant Messaging client, appears

1997 First domestic cable modem broadband in the USA

1998 Napster appears. The music industry shudders. Mozilla is born. Everyone waits

1999 Gnutella clients such as KaZaA launched in wake of Napster. MSN Messenger and Trillian messaging clients released

2000 Mozilla still not released

2001 Windows XP arrives, as does Mac OS X, built on UNIX with a command line

2002 Mozilla 1.0 finally appears

2003 The future starts here...

THE END SO FAR?

Back to the future

Free for all

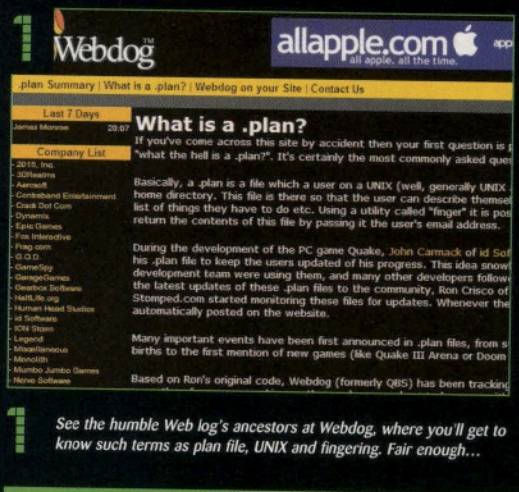
You'll find that many UNIX networking tools are available as freeware downloads in user-friendly Windows packages. SamSpade (**www.samspade.org/ssw**) is a domain analysis toolkit, allowing you to check the sources of spam email and potential intrusions on your PC by mapping them back to their place of origin through the Domain Name System. Along similar lines, SuperScan (**www.foundstone.com/resources/freetools.htm**) is a port scanner and 'pinger', allowing you to check whether networked machines are online, and whether specific services such as Web and mail servers are running from particular port numbers. By scanning your own machine, you can identify vulnerabilities, whether from Trojan Horse programs or from legitimate software which might attract hackers.

Finger of fate

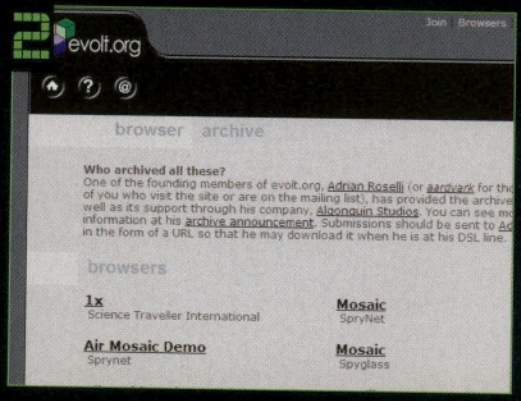
One more UNIX tool deserves special mention. Back in the days when most Net users had 'shell accounts', where you logged into a UNIX machine with a permanent connection to check your email, read newsgroups or chat with IRC, it was possible to see if other users were logged in with the oddly-named 'finger' utility. These days, as 'shell accounts' become a distant memory for most users, it's easier to use instant messaging to track people's online presence, but one advantage of being 'fingered' (ahem) was that you could keep your friends up to date with your life by editing a 'plan' file on your account. A few famous programmers, such as WinAmp's Justin Frankel and Quake author John Carmack, continue to do this for the sake of nostalgia, and while it's now easier to view these updates on the Web (**www.webdog.com**) than through the old-style 'finger' command (Eudora has a finger service, if you're interested) it's curious that most debates on the history of Web logs don't mention the 'plan-file' as an early, low-tech version of the digital diary.

Back to basics

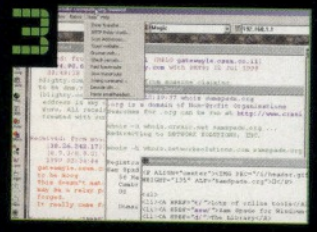
Finally, even if you're not that enthusiastic about following in the footsteps of the geeky, there are plenty of ways to streamline your system by looking backwards. While it's easy to be tempted into installing every patch and upgrade to keep your software at the cutting edge, there's usually a point in the development of any well-loved software package when the push to develop new features eases off. On the one hand, there's no point in giving up standards-compatibility for speed, which is why it's not so smart to revert to IE3.0 or Netscape 4 as your main browser. But in the case of instant messaging clients such as ICQ, or media players such as RealPlayer and Windows Media Player, there's frankly little that's been added in the last few years that benefits most users, and quite a lot – such as spyware and advertising – which actively works against them. Fortunately, developers have come up with applications such as Media Player Classic (**www.gabest.org/mpc.php**), which provides all the playback with none of the clutter, while sites such as OldVersion.com have archived 'classic' versions of some of the leading programs of the last few years, to be downloaded and installed in place of the bloated new models. Just remember that the latest isn't always the greatest – and if you've got broken software, installing upgrade after upgrade isn't going to fix it! ■



1 *See the humble Web log's ancestors at Webdog, where you'll get to know such terms as plan file, UNIX and fingering. Fair enough…*



2 *Set up as a discussion forum for developers to get their views across, evolt.org also contains a handy set of backdated browsing apps*



3 *Annoyed by spam? Get yourself a copy of SamSpade to root out the trouble-makers once and for all*

Top low tech web sites

browsers.evolt.org
The Evolt Browser Archive, put together by a group of Web designers, includes early versions of the most popular browsers and a host of other programs whose existence was, at best, fleeting. You're better off with the latest version of IE or Mozilla, but if you're interested in backwards-compatibility, this is the place to look.

www.oldversion.com
A priceless collection of early versions of some of the most popular applications and utilities currently on the market, covering everything from compression tools and spam blockers to media players and email clients, many of which are no longer available from the people who made them. And best of all – most of them are free of the nags, ad banners and spyware that bloat and infect too much modern software.

www.tinyapps.org
If it's a useful application and it's not very big, it's likely to be listed here. An Aladdin's cave of text editors, image viewers, email programs and even a complete operating system, all of which can fit onto a regular floppy disk.

www.geektools.com
A mixture of software such as network proxies, links to online 'traceroute' and domain name lookup services. There's even a list of hotels that are equipped with Wi-Fi networking, for the geek who needs to stay connected on the road.

www.sweetcode.org
A repository of 'innovative free software', Sweetcode provides regularly updated links to useful little tools, most of which obey the 'Keep It Simple, Stupid' philosophy. Some of the more esoteric projects will interest geeks and mathematicians, others definitely appeal to us lesser mortals.

I'll take the low road

Dan is happy to call himself a uber-geek. His house runs a wireless network, there are bits of cannibalised computers in his garage and he's never happier than when buying RAM. That said, his obsession doesn't run to downloading the latest updates to Windows XP. Both his desktop and laptop PCs run Linux, he reads his mail with the text-only Mutt client (**www.mutt.org**), spends far too much time talking about Linux on a top secret, single-server IRC channel, and uses the user-unfriendly text editor Vim (**www.vim.org**) to work with documents.

This might seem deliberately perverse, but Dan doesn't think so: "I've worked out what suits me best, and I'm happy to stick with it," he explains. While friends have gone down with carpal tunnel syndrome thanks to excessive mouse-waggling, Dan's keyboard-centric working patterns, assisted by macros, shortcuts and little UNIX programs, mean that his wrists stay supple. "I learnt all this in college in the late Eighties when I first went online, and there's no point in learning new stuff to do the same things." His only regret? "When my mum rings up, and her email isn't working, I haven't a clue how to fix it…"

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The most fanatical fans on the Net!

The most fana fans on the Net!

OBSESSIVE ENTHUSIASTS OF EVERY STRIPE HAVE ADOPTED THE INTERNET AS THEIR HOME. **HAL DEVLIN** GOES IN SEARCH OF THE MOST FERVENT AND FANATICAL FANS TO BE FOUND ONLINE

In the Sixties, Beatles fans screamed so loud that the band couldn't hear themselves play. In the Seventies, millions mourned the passing of Elvis and in the Eighties people honoured their favourite stars by adopting ludicrous hairstyles. While this acceptable face of fandom has always been visible, an altogether more obsessive strain has been hidden behind basement and bedroom doors. All the model-makers and the nit-pickers, the collectors and cataloguers would worship their idols in isolation. That is, until the Internet came along.

With the birth of global email, messageboards, Usenet and the Web, marginalised branches of fandom have been able to grow into fully-fledged cultures and communities. They have their own language, rituals, fashion and gatherings. They even have their own music and literature created by the community for the community. The Internet strengthened and swelled the ranks of fans across the world, as people were able to find and communicate with others who shared their obsessions much more easily than they ever could before.

The template for this model of fandom goes back to a predictable root: *Star Trek*. Many fan practices were adopted from science fiction culture, but *Trek* enthusiasts were the first TV fans to have their own gatherings, newsletters and 'dress code'. Fans of TV programmes, pop stars and celebrities everywhere now adopt the patterns they first established. Still, even among these fervent worshippers of popular culture there are fans whose obsession goes above and beyond the call of duty – and they're out there, online. Within these pages we've gathered together some of the most fanatical fans on the Net – and they tell us about their beautiful obsessions.

Fan speak

FAN SITES CAN HAVE A BEWILDERING ARRAY OF NEW WORDS AND TERMS, SO IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR SPUFFY FROM YOUR FANFIC, BRUSH UP ON THE LINGO HERE

Fen
The fannish plural of 'fan'.

Fanfic
Fan-written stories. The most famous writers have their own followers – and you can find fan fiction about any subject under the sun, from *Starsky and Hutch* to Princess Di.

Slash
Fanfic that depicts sexual encounters between characters. The trend originated with *Star Trek* fans who wrote stories about Captain Kirk getting jiggy with Mr Spock. These tales were classified with the label Kirk/Spock – hence 'slash'. It doesn't have to be homoerotic, but a surprising amount of it is.

Shipper
Shortened from 'relationshipper', this is a sub-category of fan who watches their favourite TV series rooting for two particular characters to get it together. Shippers are then further categorised by the particular relationship that holds their interest.

BtVS
Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Spuffy
In BtVS, 'Spuffy' storylines are those dedicated to Spike (the Billy Idol lookalike vampire) and Buffy.

X-Phile
A fan of the *X-Files.*

Filk
A musical genre that's devoted to telling tales about the object of the fan's affections.

Con
Abbreviated from 'convention'. These are large-scale, organised meetings that include talks from stars, autograph signing sessions, trade shows and social events. Most of the pictures you see of people dressed as aliens come from these.

The most fanatical fans on the Net!

tical

Star Trekkers

WARP 11
www.warp11.com

Could you imagine Green Day dressing in torn *Star Trek* uniforms? Or singing songs about making 'backdoor' lurve to Lieutenant Uhura? If so, you'll probably love Warp 11, a Sacramento-based skate-punk quartet whose songs are exclusively about *Star Trek*. Though they poke fun at Kirk's original crew and Picard's next generation, Warp 11 are Trekkies through and through. "It would be hard to write over two hours of original songs if you didn't enjoy the show," band leader 'Captain' Karl Miller told us. "Besides, who doesn't love hot chicks in go-go boots?"

You'd think that a set full of *Trek* could become tedious, but Warp 11 have an ace up their sleeve. They're actually pretty good. With titles like 'Suds Me Up, Sulu' and 'Spock Me, Shock Me', they have to be.

Still, being the world's only *Trek*-themed punk rock band can have its odd moments. "We were playing in a bar somewhere in a small farming town," Captain Karl told us. "I was dressing up as a green slave girl to celebrate St Patrick's day and was standing in the toilet wearing nothing but a pair of green panties while a 360-pound man dressed as a Klingon slathered green paint all over my body with his bare hands. At that moment a redneck member of the audience stumbled in and stood there frozen, his mouth hanging open. He stayed for the rest of the show though".

Warp 11's debut CD *Red Alert* is available from their Web site and through **www.amazon.com**.

If you'd like to join the Warp 11 crew as they boldly go where no band has gone before, beam yourself up to their Web site, which you can find at ***www.warp11.com***

Warp 11 aren't your average Star Trek *fans... Playing to packed venues across the west coast of the States, they play* Star Trek*-inspired pop with a punky punch*

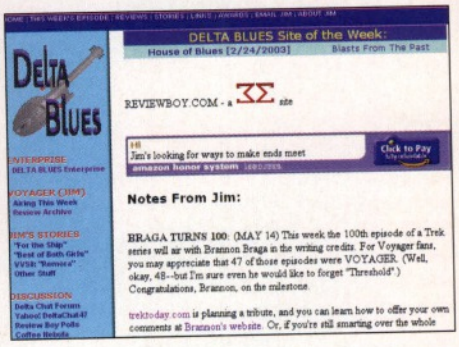
REVIEW BOY
www.reviewboy.com

After being asked by his co-workers to provide episode summaries of *Star Trek: Voyager*, Jim Wright started producing blow-by-blow reviews of every single episode – reviews that were so detailed and packed with Jim's comedic sensibilities that they were often more entertaining than the real deal.

Jim posted these pithy transcripts to his Web site and word quickly spread. "The 'shippers loved me because I acknowledged their existence, the fanfic authors appreciated the comprehensive resource and the trivia buffs liked me too." Appreciated the world over, Wright spent around 18 hours on each review, watching every episode a minimum of three times. His dedication attracted his own fan base.

"I was in the lobby at the Galaxy Ball convention when a handful of women approached: 'Are you THE Jim Wright?' they squealed. 'We are such big fans of your work. It's as thrilling to meet you as the actors.'"

We wondered what kept Jim going during *Voyager's* 182 episodes. "I was alone and far from home," Jim admitted. Now he's started life anew in California. "I watch very little television these days," Jim told us, "But I'm dating more, so it's a fair trade..."


DELTA BLUES Site of the Week:
House of Blues [2/24/2003]
Blasts From The Past
DELTA BLUES
REVIEWBOY.COM - a ΣΣ site
Jim's looking for ways to make ends meet
amazon honor system
Click to Pay
Notes From Jim:
BRAGA TURNS 100: (MAY 14) This week the 100th episode of a Trek series will air with Brannon Braga in the writing credits. For Voyager fans, you may appreciate that 47 of those episodes were VOYAGER. (Well, okay, 48--but I'm sure even he would like to forget "Threshold".)
Congratulations, Brannon, on the milestone.
trektoday.com is planning a tribute, and you can learn how to offer your own comments at Brannon's website. Or, if you're still smarting over the whole

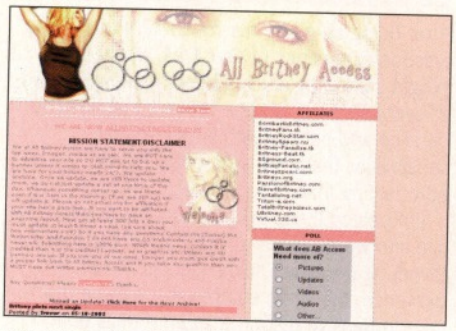
The most fanatical fans on the Net!

ALL BRITNEY ACCESS
www.allbritneyaccess.tk

Beloved of teenage girls graduating from Barbie, Britney Spears is perfect fan fodder. The chasm between her private and public life fuels an entire industry of gossip, and one fan site in particular.

"Am I Britney's biggest fan? No not really," says Trevor Brown, Webmaster of All Britney Access. "I love her. But I am not, like, screaming when she comes on the TV. But if I ever met her I would be, like, screaming".

Updated several times a day (even when there's no news), Trevor's Web log gathers all the latest Britney pictures and gossip in one place. As he works on the site Trevor is kept company by his collection of life-sized Britney posters: "I have one worth over $1,000. It's a cardboard, 3D standout poster. I love it". Recently, Trevor's site scooped the entertainment papers with news on Britney's new album. "I told the record company that because Britney hasn't done an album in two years that her fans really deserve it. But I never mentioned I had a site".

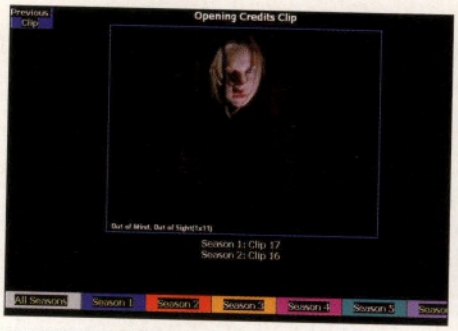


Trevor Brown claims to have collected around 500 images of Britney Spears from all over the Net. He posts them for your viewing pleasure at All Britney Access

THE DRAGON'S SLAYERS LAIR
slayer.liquidseats.net

There's a whole generation of people who worship a certain blonde, but *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fan Tim Marshall has gone further in his fervour than most. His site catalogues all the clips that appear in the opening title sequences of the series, complete with episode references and screenshots for each. Every clip has its own page, detailing whether the shot was used in an episode or was an alternate take.

"I started by going through each title sequence frame-by-frame to note down all the clips. There are 14 different title sequences in all. I knew most of the clips from sight so it didn't take much effort to match them to specific episodes". Tim told us he spends 20-25 hours a week watching *Buffy*, searching for slayer-related stuff on the Net or updating his Web site – a level of dedication that explains how he was able to match the clips from memory. "When the series ends I really don't expect my interest to wane. It means too much to me," Tim explained.



Tim's site bypasses the obvious attractions of Buffy the Vampire Slayer *and instead concentrates on the title sequences for every episode, breaking each down shot by shot*

THE 1966 BATMOBILE
www.1966batmobile.com

Bat-fan Eric Seltzer never forgot the toy he was given as a four-year-old – a battery-operated tin Batmobile. It was the beginning of a lifetime obsession. In his late twenties, after years of scouring antique and collector's fairs, he finally found a replacement for the long lost toy. "It set me back about $250, but I was happy to pay the price. Since then I have owned, at one time or another, about ten of these tin toys in various colours and in various conditions"

Eric's fanaticism doesn't stop with the toy though; he's collected together every scrap of information there is about the original TV Batmobile, built his own models and visited the original designer (who still owns the car used in the show). As if that wasn't enough he now has a new project – building a full working replica of the Batcycle. If you were to look up 'fanaticism' in a dictionary, you might see a picture of Eric…

Eric Seltzer's Batmobile obsession is explored in minute detail on his Web site, from encounters with the original designer to step-by-step photographs showing how he built his own model

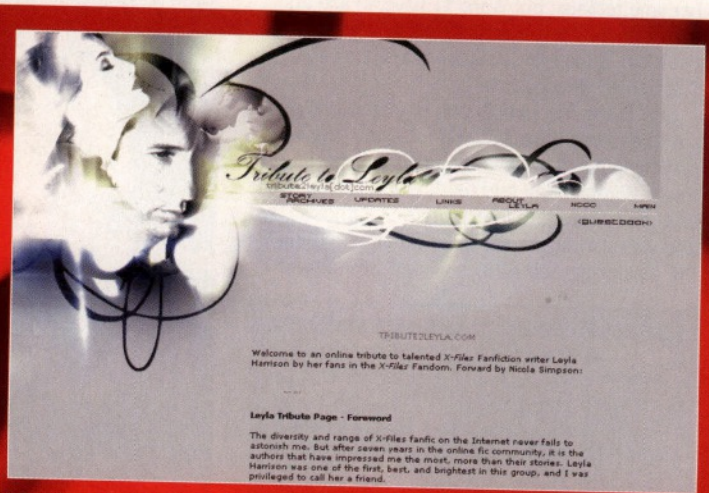
Dying for the truth

In 2001, Leyla Harrison, an avid *X-Files* fan, died after a long battle with skin cancer. A talented and well-known writer of fan fiction, the producers of the show paid her a special tribute, naming a trivia-obsessed FBI agent after Leyla in the episode 'Alone'.

A little over a year later, the husband of another fan fiction writer posted a message to a popular *X-Files* bulletin board saying that his 22-year-old wife was dying of pneumonia. Evie Whiting went on to compose many poignant farewell messages to the community – the sorrow and sympathy expressed by fans was as real as it had been for Leyla Harrison. Messages of condolence flooded onto the board when Evie died and a fundraising drive to benefit her orphaned twins was hastily conceived. The problem was that Evie was an invention – and her death a hoax.

Fans began to realise something was wrong when details of her funeral in India were posted, with clear errors in timing and geography. Some of the fans contacted Dr Marc Feldman, an expert in 'Munchausen's Syndrome', who confirmed that posts from 'Evie' her 'husband' and 'sister' conformed to the profile of the illness – a mental condition where sufferers feign physical infirmity to attract attention. Among the inconsistencies that were spotted were exaggerated bouts of illness followed by miraculous recoveries and identical writing patterns among multiple 'characters' proving they'd been written by the same person.

In this case it seemed that the hoaxer was after more than just a little attention. Having seen Leyla Harrison's immortalisation as a character on the show, they were almost literally dying to get onto the *X-Files*.


Tribute to Leyla
TRIBUTE2LEYLA.COM
Welcome to an online tribute to talented X-Files Fanfiction writer Leyla Harrison by her fans in the X-Files Fandom. Forward by Nicola Simpson:
Leyla Tribute Page - Foreword
The diversity and range of X-Files fanfic on the Internet never fails to astonish me. But after seven years in the online fic community, it is the authors that have impressed me the most, more than their stories. Leyla Harrison was one of the first, best, and brightest in this group, and I was privileged to call her a friend.

X-Files fan and amateur writer Leyla Harrison's death moved the X-Files *community so much that she now has her own tribute site. You'll find it at* **www.tribute2leyla.com**

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HITMATIC started in January 1999 offering basic statistical reports and hit counters. The popularity of the statistical service has been the driving force behind their ongoing development and resulting upgrades. Email **hitmatic@hitmatic.com** or visit their website at **www.hitmatic.com** for more information.

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The brief

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Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 15 mins

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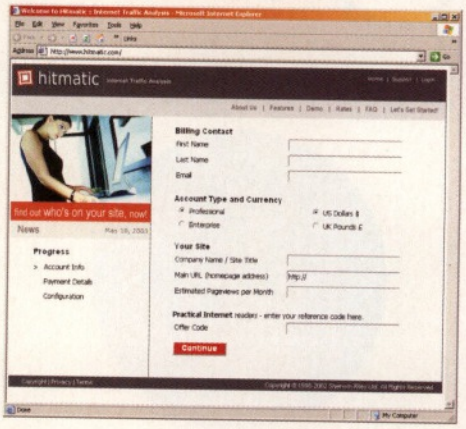

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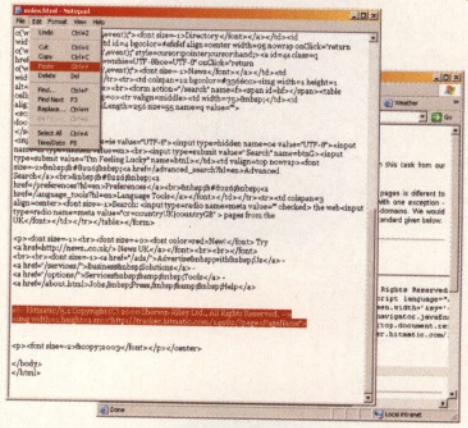
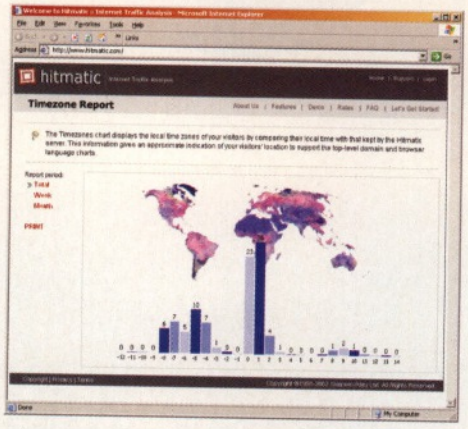


2 Install the code

Log in to your Hitmatic account, using the account details sent by email. Go to the Support section and **download the Hitmatic code**. You now need to cut and paste the code into the HTML of your pages. Now **upload the changes** to your website, and Hitmatic is operational.



3 Get the reports

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FIND OUT WHY A GREEN MONSTER IS THE BIGGEST THING ON THE NET – P48

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD STUNNING SITES

Webmaster

■ IN-DEPTH FEATURES ■ STEP-BY-STEP WORKSHOPS ■ HAND-CODING MASTERCLASS

WELCOME...

MAKING YOUR SITE sticky is a problem for anybody, and many popular sites have succeeded despite basic designs. Time and again, the biggest draw for punters is interaction – let's face it, you're bound to keep playing a basic copy of Monopoly more often than you read last Friday's newspaper.

Our workshop on creating a Space Invaders game should give you everything you need to get people coming back to your site for more. Follow the workshop, shove it on your site, and we bet that people will come flocking to your site.

Thomas Watson, Editor

What's inside...

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We chat to the team behind the impressive new Hulk Web site

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Build a cool retro Space Invaders game entirely in Flash MX

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Ensure that your forms are okay with some JavaScript trickery

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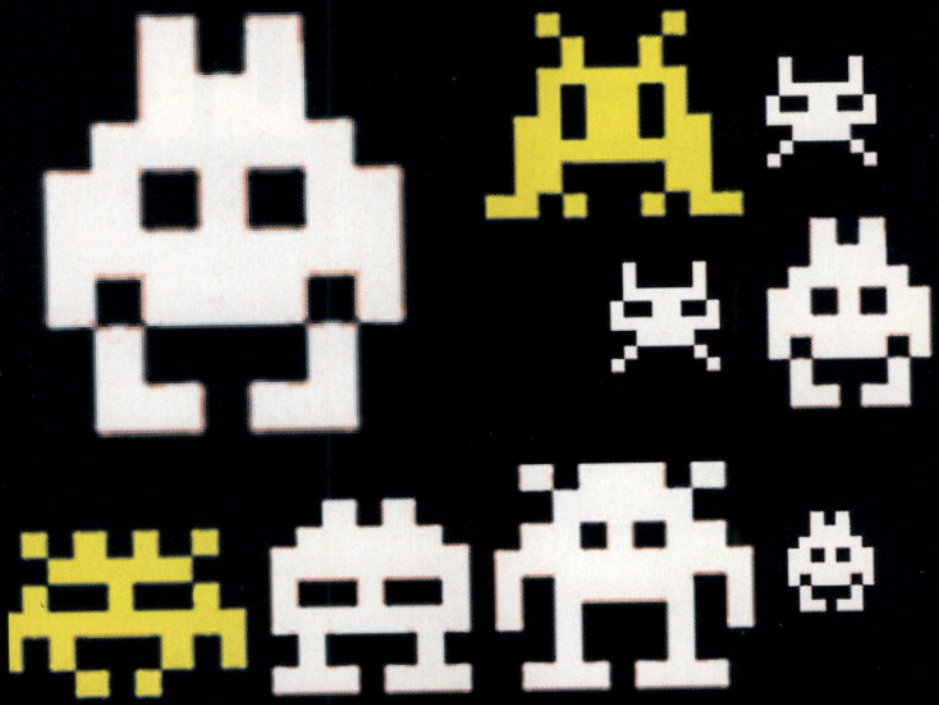
Tie up your shopping cart with the final part of our serial workshop

68 Web design Q&A
Jolly James Seabright offers advice to the Web-building needy out there



Space Invaders

FURNISH YOUR SITE WITH A CLONE OF THE CLASSIC ARCADE GAME – AND YOU WON'T NEED ANYTHING MORE THAN A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF FLASH MX SEE PAGE 54

Also in Webmaster this issue...

Page 48

He's big, green and scary, but hordes of people have been flocking to the Hulk's Web site. We show you how the team involved created the Web presence of the adrenalin-packed superhero

Page 66

If you've been following our PHP/MySQL workshops over the past couple of months, you should now be ready to finish off your shopping cart. We give you the final part of our trilogy

How we built... The Hulk.com

THIS MONTH WE DISCOVER HOW UNIVERSAL STUDIOS MANAGED TO TAME THE MONSTROUS SUPERHERO AND LURE HIM ONTO THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Following the recent box office successes of *X-men* and *Spiderman*, movie-makers seem only too happy to plunder old comic books for ideas. The latest offering is The Hulk's first real foray onto celluloid, and should be rampaging through cinemas as you read this. Promising a different slant on the popular tale, Universal has enlisted the directing talents of Ang Lee, famed for his work on *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, and it looks a veritable smash.

Many on these shores will still remember the character from the Seventies TV series, where a freak radiation experiment transformed Dr David Banner into his green-skinned alter ego. Starring the late Bill Bixby and bodybuilding supremo Lou Ferrigno, the show captured the public's imagination and left kids everywhere with the catchphrase: 'Don't make me angry... You wouldn't like me when I'm angry'. In actual fact, Marvel comics, responsible for countless cartoon creations, had originally chronicled Bruce Banner's (his name was changed for TV) adventures since 1962. Deemed a failure after an initial run of only six issues, 'The Incredible Hulk' found reader popularity with cameo appearances in other comic titles. It then wasn't long before everyone's favourite muscle-bound freak commanded his own series in the late Sixties.

Since then, interest hasn't faltered, and when the movie's production was confirmed, thoughts turned to marketing the product. It was here that Universal Studios decided to enlist the services of DNA Studio to provide an exciting online presence. With the fundamental aim to promote a feature largely under wraps, it left the designers in no doubt about their brief. Hilary Hattenbach, New Media Marketing Manager at Universal Studios, comments that the aim was "to drive audiences to see the film and create an online experience that resembles that of the movie".

Publicising films in this way is not a new thing for studios, although something like The Hulk can mean a whole sub-culture among fans. With this in mind, the developers took time to consider what people would expect. "We did quite a lot of research using the comic book and other Hulk sources to get the right tone," Kevin Campbell, Senior Vice President, Marketing Services, explains. "The site was created to appeal to the most loyal Hulk fan and the most casual movie-goer. It has something for everyone."

> **"IT'S IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY THE QUALITIES IN THE CHARACTER THAT SPEAK TO FANS"** HILARY HATTENBACH

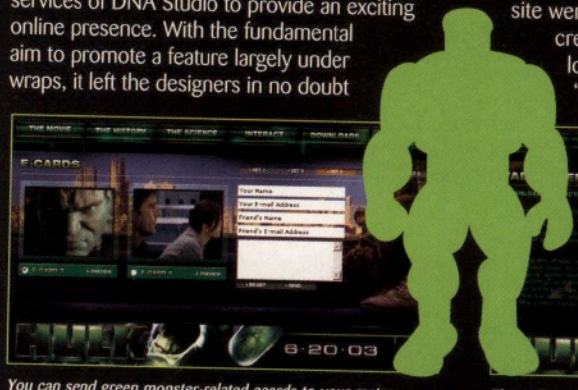
Indeed, fans are treated to an experience that cleverly echoes the darker vibe the movie has adopted. A unique blend of brooding artwork and dark audio makes navigating the site a highly atmospheric experience. This attempt to tie film and site content together was a conscious one, although not without some difficulty. Hattenbach reveals that, with the site due to go live almost a year before the film's release, a major concern was finding relevant resources. "The movie wasn't finished when the site went live, so it was a real challenge to create a site that would communicate the look and feel of the film," she laments. "Since the trailer was the earliest available asset, it played a big part in the overall site design and development."

Although this is a slightly unorthodox way of working, Universal and DNA managed to find a unique compromise for the site. A fans' forum was included so that news and opinions could be shared, providing the foundations for growing content. "The fans' section was built to give existing Hulk fans a forum to discuss the film and to build community among the fans," explains Kevin Campbell. "And the Webmaster program has been extremely successful in bringing dedicated Hulk fans together." This has allowed the site to become not only a hub for the film, but a portal for all official Hulk sources on the Web: "It allows Webmasters to extend the Hulk movie brand to their own Web sites and become part of the Hulk experience."

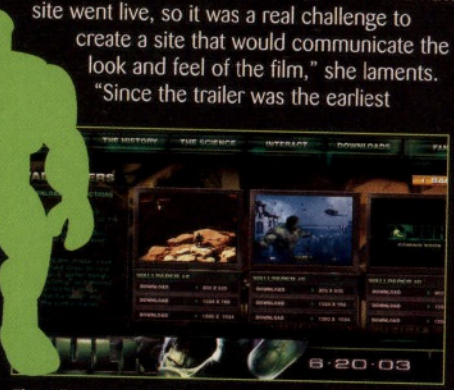
Just by looking at the site, you can appreciate that designing and building the pages took some time. Production spanned eight months and continues to run, with new sections added and revisions made to existing content. "Building the site took 50 people, working a combined total of over 6,500 hours on tasks including concept design, creative development, engineering the pages and the games, quality assessment and site marketing," Campbell recalls. In terms of tools, DNA managed to achieve a polished look for its sites by using only Flash and Director. Any question of this alienating those visitors without browser support was offset by the studio's own findings: "According to recent statistics, more than 85 per cent of our site visitors have Flash enabled on their computers."

Interactive features

One of the most compelling aspects of the site is its range of interactive features. These include some original and fun games that even allow players the chance to demolish a city with the angry green monster himself. It seems these elements required more consideration than most, with the developers keen to exploit the



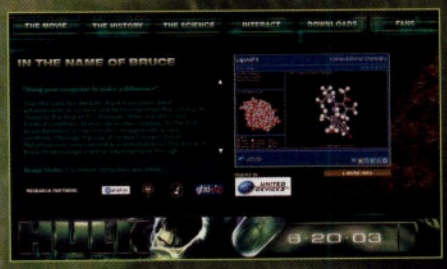
You can send green monster-related ecards to your mates thanks to an interactive element on the site



The wallpaper section lets you adorn your desktop with images from the movie, and a host of other Hulk pictures

The Hulk.com

Interactive elements on the site include a section where you can send questions to director Ang Lee and members of the cast



Always one to help out those in need, the Hulk even asks you to let other people use your unwanted PC resources

If you want more Hulk hype, pop down to the photos section of the site, which is updated regularly to include more images

character's appeal. "It's important to identify the qualities in the character that speak to fans and figure out a way to amplify those qualities in gameplay," says Hilary Hattenbach. "The character of The Hulk represents the monster that exists in all of us when we become angry. Users love the games because they are able to experience what the character experiences."

Similarly, a new feature is soon to be launched that attempts to archive almost 50 years' worth of Hulk trivia. 'Modern Evolution of The Hulk' has apparently been one of the most troublesome tasks for production, according to the team: "The challenge was to find a way to display data about a variety of different characters in a way that's easy for the user to navigate." Universal had specific requirements for the section that were eventually met after designers spent 200 hours throwing around ideas. "Not coincidentally, it is also the part of the site we are proudest of, and the fans will love it."

In actual fact, there does seem to be a real fan-bias to what Universal and DNA have tried to do. The impression is that those responsible were, or have become, genuine 'Hulksters' themselves. "People love The Hulk Smash game, The Stan Lee interview, and The Photo Gallery," Hattenbach enthuses. Securing exclusive rights to the latest stills and cast dialogues reveals a real intuition about what visitors want to see: "At this point we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the fans about the site."

Long may it continue, and the plan is that it will. With the film gearing itself up for box office domination, it seems that The Hulk's temporary online home will become a permanent one. Universal's expectations are that the site will only get bigger and more exciting once the film is received. "The site will continue to be the destination for all things Hulk on the Web," insist the proud creators. "Fans will always be able to access this super site to get Hulk information."

Good news we reckon, should a certain Dr Banner like the site, because we all know that you really don't want to make him angry... ■

The Hulk movie home page gives you access to all the sections of the site, and injects a bit of atmosphere into the proceedings

Site stats

The Hulk
www.thehulk.com

- **Who designed it?**
  DNA Studio
- **Number of people involved?**
  A team of 50 designers, authors and testers
- **Software used?**
  Macromedia Flash and Director
- **Number of languages supported?**
  Six

Optimise your images for use on the Web

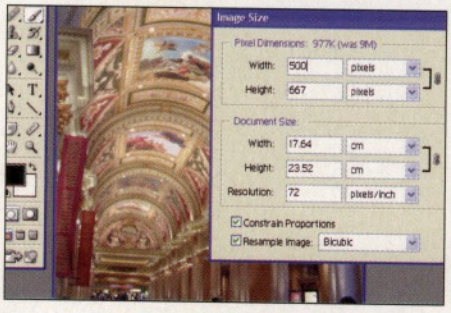
IS YOUR SITE LITERALLY A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES OR ARE YOU STRIVING FOR PIXEL PERFECTION? **DARREN LOCK** REVEALS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

When the Internet first entered the general public's consciousness, it was a place very different to the World Wide Web we know today. In the old days (cast your minds back to 1996 and beyond), many of us were using 28Kbps dial-up connections and Web sites were like great dusty libraries constructed from text with very little graphical content. If a logo was used, it was a tiny monochrome bitmap to reduce download times. If colour images were used, it would take two minutes to download them. Very often your browser would time out in boredom, leaving you with a half-formed image, complete with broken and distorted edges.

Of course those days are long gone and many of us now whiz around using broadband and relatively fast narrowband connections. Graphics and image files are very much a part of the surfing experience now, and if a site is text-based it's usually regarded as archaic and somewhat old-fashioned.

There is a great temptation for Web designers, experienced and beginner, to almost literally throw the kitchen sink into their Web work. While colourful and graphic-intensive sites are pretty and engaging, you still need to be mindful of your potential audience. While not everyone has access to broadband connectivity, even those of us with fast connections don't want to wait while our browser cache gets crammed with oversized images.

Of course, one quick and easy way to get around such a problem is to create an alternative text-only version of your site, but that is a topic for another feature. In this piece we shall be looking at how you can reduce download times and optimise your images to their maximum potential.

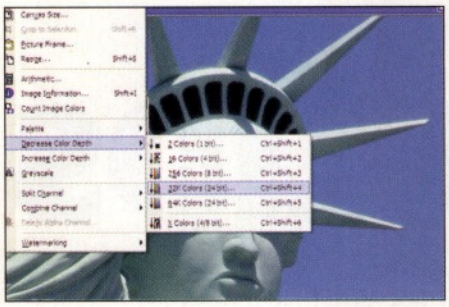


Resize your JPEGs before you start compressing them – you'll find that this will make a huge difference to file sizes

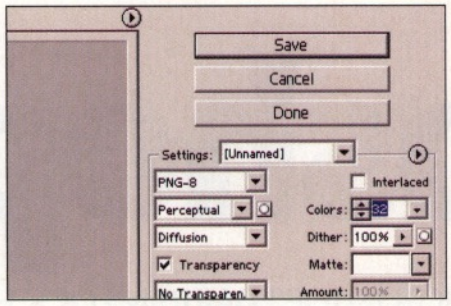
Choosing a format

The first thing you need to think about before putting images on your page is to decide what kind of graphics you are going to represent. If you are putting together logos or Web buttons, stick to graphic files such as GIF (Graphic Interchange Format) or PNG (Portable Network Graphics). If you are going to be using photographic images (or

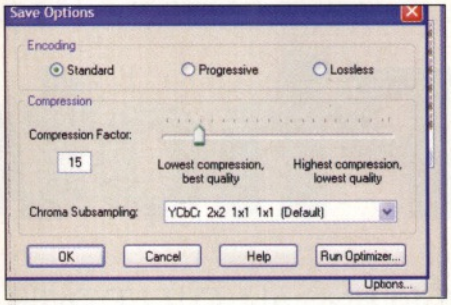
The range of compression features in programs like Photoshop provide enough scope to garner impressive results



You may think that your beloved GIFs need at least 256 colours, but you'd be surprised how good they look with much less



It was the image format voted 'most likely to be forgotten' in school, but PNG is one of the best formats around



Saving your images intelligently in the first place should remove the need for you to play around with compression in the future

logos/buttons/graphics that use photo-realistic elements) stick to the JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) file format, which was designed specifically for photographic images and has its own compression system.

Having sorted this out, you should next consider what the actual physical dimensions of the image are going to be, no matter what format you end up with. Try and make sure you design with an 800x600 screen in mind (this is surprisingly still the average screen resolution used by most browsers) and keep your image files to this resolution. Buttons should be nice and small, and you should use small compressed thumbnails for photographic images, which when clicked, link to a larger, uncompressed image. Resize your larger graphics using bilinear filter for best quality.

"TRY AND DESIGN YOUR SITE WITH AN 800X600 RESOLUTION IN MIND"

GIF us a break

When using GIF files for buttons and logos, there are a couple of things you can do to reduce the file size. First off, reduce the overall colour depth of the image. In your image editor, you can look at the colour palette and work out roughly just how many colours or shades are used. You can then drop down to a lower depth accordingly and save yourself some valuable space. You will be surprised just how much you can get away with at a colour depth of 64 colours!

If your GIF file isn't going to be transparent, make sure that no transparency layer is saved, as this will add a few extra kilobytes to the final total. Also, you might want to think about saving your GIF as a non-interlaced image, because this will knock a few bytes off too.

With JPEG files, you can't reduce the colour depth as the format is locked at a photo-realistic 16 million colours, but you do have more flexibility when it comes to compression and quality settings. When using compression with JPEGs, always make sure you back up your high-quality images first before applying compression to them, because sometimes the effects can vary from image to image – and you don't want to be stuck with a bad version of your best pictures. Images with lots of solid colour can have lots of compression applied to them without too many side effects, but the rule of thumb is that there's a direct trade-off between image quality and compression. If your image editor supports it, turn off progressive downloading as this JPEG feature increases file size, and you can also try adding a touch of blur to your image (if you can spare it), as this will significantly reduce file size too.

One of the most forgotten Web graphic formats is the PNG file. It has all the flexibility of a JPEG file (it comes with its own compression algorithm) but also has the compact qualities of a GIF. You could say it is the perfect JPEG and GIF hybrid. Originally developed to replace the GIF format, PNG can be used on both drawn and photographic image elements. With PNG, you can reduce the colour depth and use compression, and in our experience photographic images are much more palatable set at 128 colour depth compared to its GIF cousin. The PNG format is very flexible and compact, and is well worth checking out as most browsers can support the file now.

Geek speak

GIF
Short for Graphics Interchange File, this is a bitmapped graphics format which supports 256 colour images, limited compression and transparency. GIF files are often used for line drawings and illustrations.

JPEG
Short for Joint Photographic Experts Group, a file format that supports 16 million colours and its own compression system. This file format is used primarily for representing photographic material.

PNG
Short for Portable Network Graphics, originally intended to replace the GIF format, this is a highly versatile yet often overlooked graphic format. If you are looking for a good balance between GIF and JPEG, then try PNG. This is also the most effective image format to use with Flash.

Resample
This is reducing the physical size of your image by using an algorithm. There are a number of algorithms you can use such as bilinear or bicubic resampling, although bilinear resampling is regarded as the best.

Compression
A mathematical method of reducing an image's file size by looking for similar coloured pixels and removing excess pixels. There is a trade-off between image quality and file size, so this should be used sparingly.

A sample of image editors

NAME: Adobe PhotoShop 7/Elements 2
URL: www.adobe.com
PRICE: £599/£79
The big daddy of image editors and its little brother. Both applications feature the excellent Save for Web menu, which gives you total control over saving your Web images.

NAME: Paint Shop Pro 8
URL: www.jascsoftware.com
PRICE: £100
The latest version of the budget image editor is a very valuable tool for any Web designer. Paint Shop Pro can be used to optimise your images with some effectiveness.

NAME: ACDSee PowerPack
URL: www.acdsystems.com
PRICE: $79 (£48)
If you're looking for something different, then give ACDSee PowerPack a try. You can download the 30-day demo from the site and it features four applications to play with.

Photoshop tips

GETTING ALL CUT UP OVER PHOTOSHOP? **DARREN LOCK** HELPS YOU SQUEEZE MORE FROM ADOBE'S QUINTESSENTIAL IMAGE EDITOR WITH THESE TEN TOP TIPS

1 Zoom in more intelligently

If you're working in detail on a large image, it can often be difficult visualising what the entire picture will look like with the changes you've made. Photoshop 7 actually allows you to open multiple windows for the same image document and set these windows at different zoom levels, enabling you to view different versions of the same image simultaneously – so you can wave goodbye to confusion. Click on 'Window', 'Document' then 'New Window' to open a new viewing area. This nice trick means you can now zoom in and work in detail on your image, while still being able to keep your eye on the bigger picture.

2 Easier rotation

Here's an easy way for you to sort out crooked pictures. In the past, if you wanted to straighten an image, you had to rotate it incrementally until it was straight, which could take two or three attempts, and far too much time and effort for anybody. To get the same effect in half the time, simply click on the 'Measure' tool and draw a line using a straight part of the image as a guide. Now click on 'Image', 'Rotate Canvas', 'Arbitrary' and you will notice that the precise amount of rotation, in degrees, will already be filled in for you.

3 Give that man a hand

Very often if you are working on big pictures, concentrating on fine detail or are about to undergo a delicate bit of image tweaking, the cursor will disappear from your screen. Don't worry – it is still there, it's just that you've lost visual track of your Paintbrush tool. To quickly display the location of the current tool, without actually using it, press the space bar. This will bring up the Hand tool, which is non-volatile and won't affect your picture in any way.

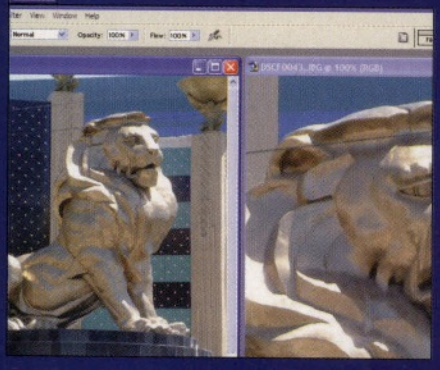
4 Calibrate gamma rays

You probably don't realise it, but every monitor and display system in the world is very different. Bearing this in mind, there's one thing you can do to make sure what you see on your screen is replicated on other people's monitors – run the Adobe Gamma wizard. You can access this from the Control Panel after you've installed Photoshop 7. To calibrate your monitor, simply run through the wizard, making sure you pay close attention to the instructions. At the end of the wizard, your settings will be saved as a colour profile file for future reference.

5 Manage your information better

In Photoshop 7, information is everywhere you look and the status bar at the bottom of the screen is a lot more useful than you might think. For example, the first column of information involves the zoom ratio. If you click in this box and type in a new ratio, the screen automatically resizes itself. Next to this is the image file size information with the scratch disk size (the size of the file held on your hard drive that works with your RAM). If you hold down the 'ALT' key and select the image file size information, all the attributes of your current image will be displayed on your screen – which is a nice shortcut to vital details. Next to that is a clickable tab, which allows you to select a number of different information settings, to fit in with your needs. The final part of the status bar tells you how to use each different tool when it is selected, which is very handy when you are finding your feet in Photoshop for the first time. Basically, this works rather like the 'Recipes' function in Photoshop Elements, although it's designed more for experienced users.

1



Get different views of the same image in Photoshop

2

Rotate images much more easily with our top tip

4

Adobe Gamma Wizard
The first step in calibrating your monitor is to adjust the brightness and contrast controls to their optimal settings.
First, set the contrast control to its highest setting.
Then, adjust the brightness control to make the center box as dark as possible (but not black) while keeping the frame a bright white.
< Back
Next >
Cancel

Ignore the weird ladies – the Gamma Wizard is great

6 Saving for Web

While Photoshop 7 allows you to export your images as Web graphics from the Save menu, it is always a good idea to use the Save for Web feature instead. This handy menu gives you the chance to display two 'before' and 'after' windows, so you can see just how image compression and dithering will affect your image. You are also given a greater deal of freedom on the Save for Web menu when it comes to adjusting the settings for compression and Web file types. By careful application of the options in this handy menu, you'll find that you'll be able to compress more image into less space, rather than just saving your image blindly as a JPEG or GIF file from the Save menu.

7 Keyboard zooming

One of the most widely used tools in Photoshop 7 is the Zoom tool. While most of you probably just pick the magnifying glass icon and click away, searching for the perfect view, there is a much easier and quicker way to zoom in and out of your pictures. Holding down the CTRL key while pressing + or – on the numeric keypad or keyboard will allow you to zoom in and out respectively. If you repeat the process but hold down the ALT key too, the image window maximises to the constraints of the zoomed image – giving you the ultra-speedy zooming techniques that the Photoshop masters use. Of course, you could also type in the zoom amount directly into the zoom information area on the status bar (described in step five).

8 Pixel-perfect movement

When an image element is selected, not only can you move it with the Move tool, but you can also nudge it around the screen with pixel precision by holding the CTRL key and pressing the cursor buttons. This moves the element one pixel at a time and affords you much more control over your image than any mouse moves would give you.

9 Really straight lines

Unless you have the physical dexterity of a yoga master and the discipline and restraint of a brain surgeon, drawing perfectly straight lines with a mouse is impossible, and holding a ruler against the monitor screen doesn't seem to help. Don't fret; there is a solution to this seemingly insurmountable problem. With the Line Drawing tool selected, hold down the SHIFT key – this will allow you to draw perfectly straight lines. You can vary the axis in 45 degree steps by moving the mouse. What's more, this tip also works with the other painting tools.

10 Keyboard shortcuts

No matter how well you know your way around Photoshop, you can always benefit from a few well-intentioned keyboard shortcuts. Here are some of our favourites:

CTRL+A – Select all

CTRL+C – Copy

CTRL+V – Paste

CTRL+S – Save

CTRL+D – Deselect

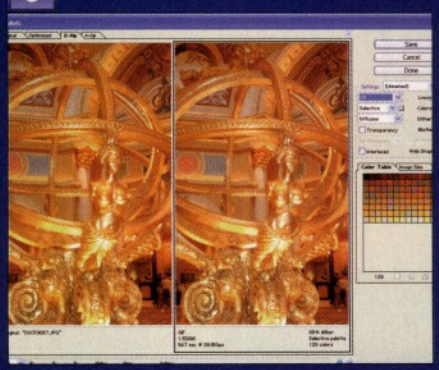
CTRL+Z – Undo

CTRL+U – Adjust Hue/Saturation

CTRL+X – Cut (useful for layers)

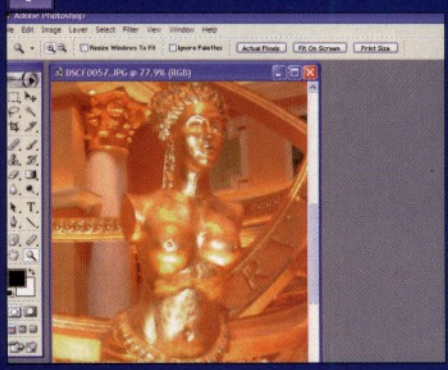
CTRL+ALT+SHIFT+S – Save for Web

6



The Save for Web screen gives you much more scope for tweaks

7



Zooming in with the keyboard makes life much, much easier

Photoshop tips online

PhotoShop Tips & Tricks

www.graphic-design.com/photoshop/index.html

For even more hints and help, head over to this site for professional advice and practical guides to getting the best from Photoshop. It's a good-looking site, with a magazine format, and it is packed with tutorials from Photoshop experts.

Eyewire

www.eyewire.com/tips/photoshop

This is another advice site for getting the best from Photoshop. The Eyewire site concentrates more on photo-editing than Web design, but there's still enough here for Webheads. Highlights of the site include creating spherical elements and transparent Web graphics.

Designs By Mark

www.designsbymark.com/pstips

For those of you who find it a bit intimidating ploughing through reams and reams of tips and tutorials, give the Designs By Mark site a try. The novelty here is that tutorials come in QuickTime video format. Download 'em and watch at your leisure.

In brief:
Task: Create your own oline version of Space Invaders
Software I need: Flash MX
Difficulty: Like the game, it gets quite difficult
Time I need: Give it a couple of hours

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Build a Space Invaders game with Flash MX

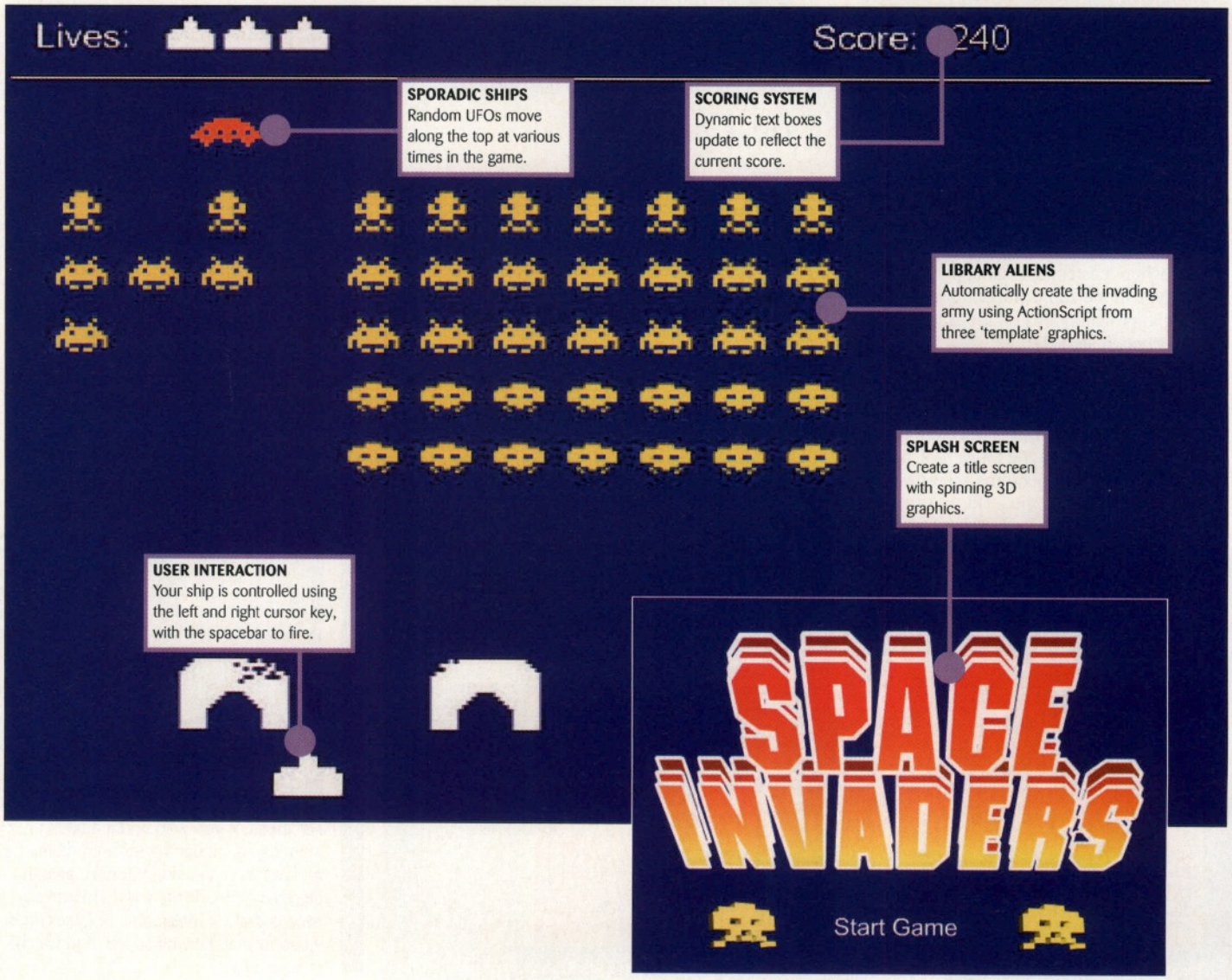
USE FLASH MX TO RE-CREATE THE OLD CLASSIC ARCADE HIT, SPACE INVADERS, AND MAKE YOUR WEB SITE NOSTALGIC WITH SOME RETRO GAMEPLAY

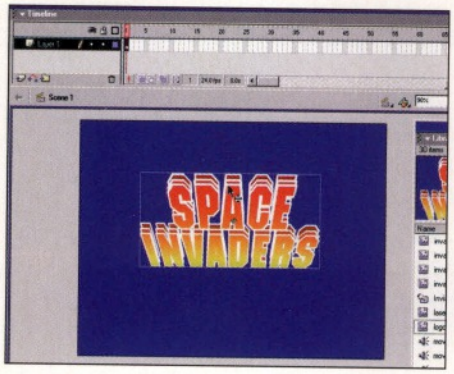
GETTING VISITORS TO return to your site is all about offering then something unique – such as a taste of yesteryear with the retro cool of Space Invaders. This game launched the arcade game phenomenon back in 1978, and is now enjoying a mini revival on the latest mobile phones.

Gaming is enjoyed by almost everyone, and its popularity can be seen at **www.shockwave.com** and **www.flasharcade.com.** Incorporating a game will be even better if it can be themed to your subject matter, and changing some of the graphics will make it your own arcade hit!

Flash MX is a versatile piece of software, and its unique control of graphics from ActionScript makes it the obvious choice for creating online games. In this tutorial you'll place graphical Flash movie clips onto the stage and give them an Instance name, which is then used by the ActionScript to control those graphics as a game.

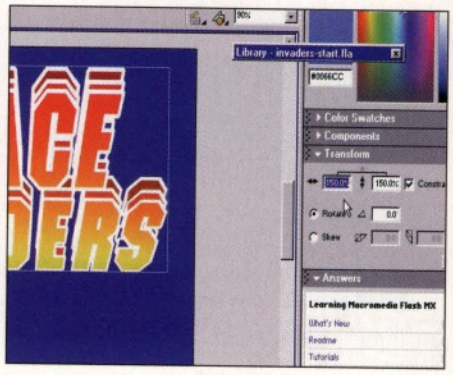
Flash will keep the file size of the game down, and to make it smaller still, you can remove the 3D-animated invaders at the title and 'Game Over' screen. The Flash Player plug-in is the best distribution method for interactive content online.


Lives:
Score: 240
SPORADIC SHIPS
Random UFOs move along the top at various times in the game.
SCORING SYSTEM
Dynamic text boxes update to reflect the current score.
LIBRARY ALIENS
Automatically create the invading army using ActionScript from three 'template' graphics.
SPLASH SCREEN
Create a title screen with spinning 3D graphics.
USER INTERACTION
Your ship is controlled using the left and right cursor key, with the spacebar to fire.
SPACE INVADERS
Start Game



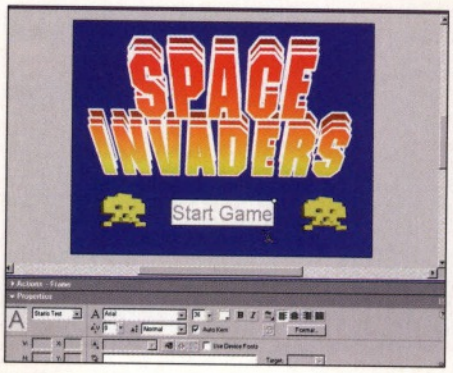
1 Getting started

Start Flash MX and open the file 'invaders-start.fla' from the cover CD, as this has all the graphics in the library ready to start. Open the library by pressing 'CTRL' + 'L', then drag the 'Logo' symbol onto the stage.



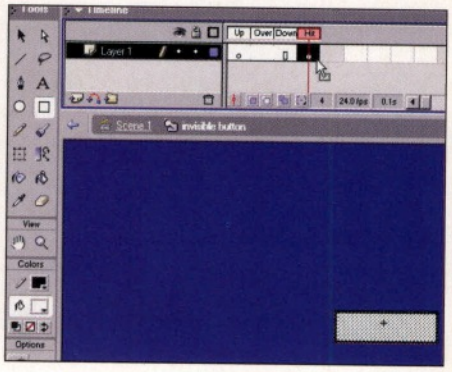
2 Scale the graphic

If you haven't got the Transform palette open, go to the 'Window' menu and hit 'Transform'. Make sure the logo is selected on the screen then scale the graphic up to '150%' in the Transform palette. Drag the '3D-invader' symbol from the library to the stage.



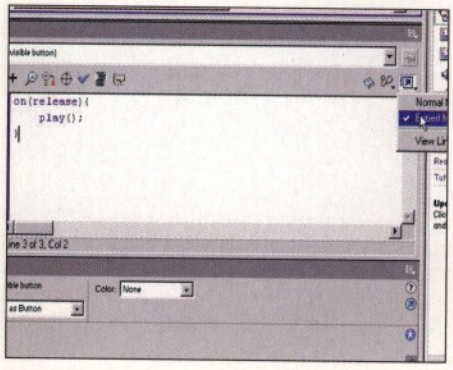
3 Scale again

Now scale the invader to '50%' in the Transform palette then copy and paste the invader. Position the two invaders at each side of the screen then use the 'Text' tool to write the words 'Start Game' between the them.



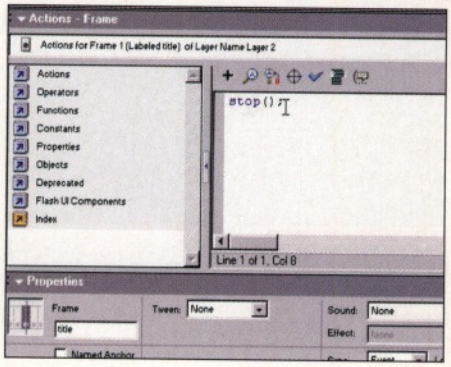
4 A new symbol

In the Library palette click the 'Plus' symbol in the bottom corner. Name it 'Invisible button', make the behaviour a 'Button' and click 'OK'. Click the last frame of the button (hit), press 'F6' to enter a keyframe and draw a rectangle over the crosshairs.



5 Action station

Click the 'Scene 1' label under the timeline to return to the main scene. Drag your invisible button from the library to the 'Start Game' text. Click on the 'Actions' tab just above the Properties and change the mode to 'Expert', then type the code as shown.



6 A new layer

Create a new layer and select 'Frame 1'. In the Properties palette give Frame 1 the label 'Title' and hit 'RETURN' then click on 'Actions' again. This time type 'stop();' to stop the playhead moving straight into the game. Now create a layer folder and name it 'Start'.

Jargon buster

Library

The library is the area in Flash that stores all the media you intend using in a project. You can store imported objects such as movie clips, sounds and pictures, or you can create your own Flash movie clips, buttons and graphics in here. Items that are in the library but never appear on the stage do not get published when you export the Flash file.

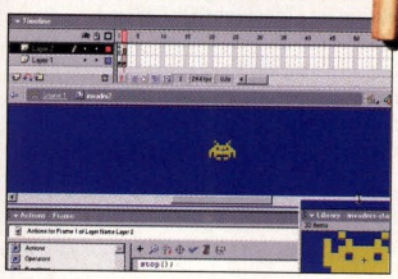
Symbol

A symbol is any object that appears in the library, no matter what behaviour it has or whether it was created in Flash or an external application.

Instance name

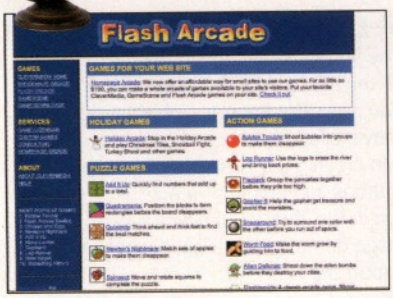
When symbols are dragged from the library to the stage, they become Instances of that particular symbol. By dragging many Instances of the same symbol to the stage, your file size barely increases in your published Flash file, because once the symbol is loaded it can be accessed many times. The Instance name is given to individual Instances so that they can be controlled from the ActionScript code.

Power users' tip



IN THE WORKSHOP many of the components have been pre-built to help you concentrate on the assembly of the game. If you double-click on any of the movie clips in the library, you can see how they are built – for example each of the three invaders are two-frame movie clips with a different animation step on each frame. There is also a Stop command, so that the speed can be controlled from the code. Each of the invaders follows the same principle: a two-frame animation with a Stop command. The graphics themselves were not drawn but come from a font called 'Invaders'.

Web resources



Flash Arcade

www.flasharcade.com

This site is dedicated to bringing you hundreds of online games to play, all neatly arranged into categories such as Puzzle games and Shoot-'em-up. Why not head over there for some inspirational games that are all created in Flash?

Abstract Fonts

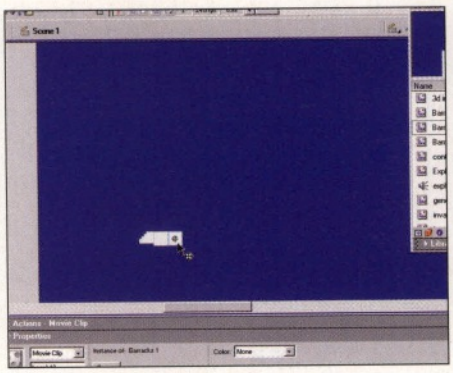
www.abstractfonts.com/fonts/designers/?designerID=79&p=3

At this Web site you'll be able to download Invaders Regular, the font used to create many of the graphics in the game. The font also contains the Space Invaders logo as used on the opening screen of the game.

WZ2K

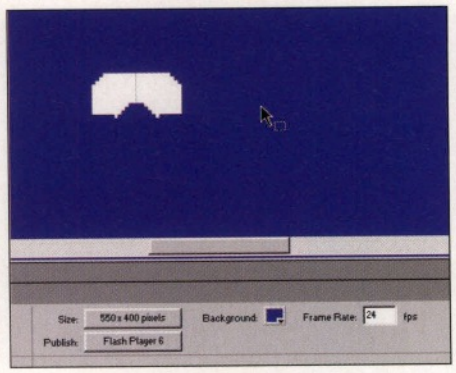
www.psmeg.co.uk/pages/flash_tut_index.htm

This site has really nice Flash tutorials, and there's a Games Techniques section with six sub-sections. These are handy tutorials to help you get to grips with programming your own ActionScript wonders.



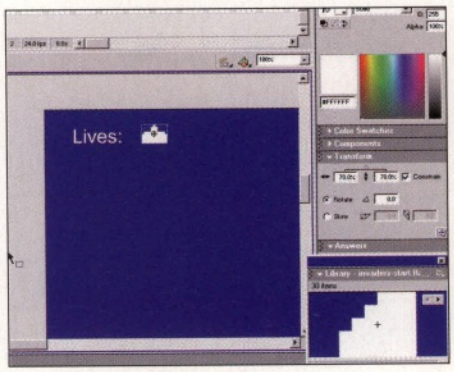
7 Make the barracks

Drag the two layers into the 'Start' folder and close it down. Create a new layer, renaming it 'Game' and select 'Frame 2'; press 'F6' to enter a keyframe. Zoom in to '200%' and drag 'Barracks 2' to the stage; drag in two copies of 'Barracks 1' and place as shown.



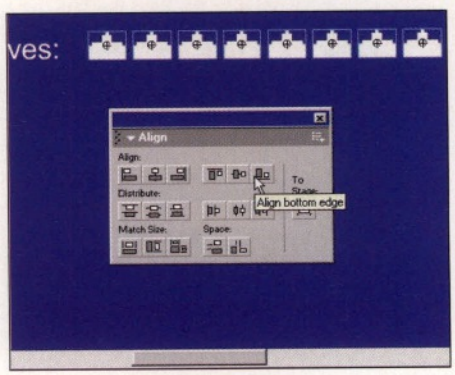
8 Copy the corner

Copy and paste the corner barrack, then pick 'Transform', 'Flip Horizontal' from the 'Modify' menu. Place it at the right of the barrack. Drag on 'Barracks 3', place it under the first row, copy it and flip as before, and add two more copies of 'Barracks 1'.



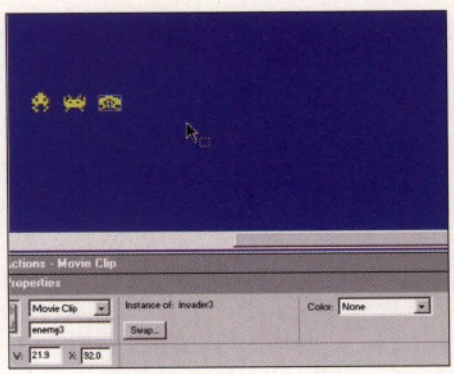
11 Get a life

The trickiest part of building the game is now sorted, so the rest should be plain sailing. Using the 'Text' tool, in the top left of the stage type the word 'Lives:' Drag the 'Ship' symbol from the library to the stage and resize it to '70%' in the Transform palette.



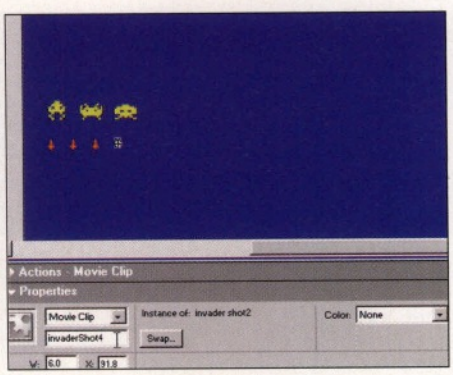
12 Copy the ship

Copy and paste the 'Ship' symbol seven times and use the 'Align' palette from the Window menu to line up the symbols; use 'Distribute Horizontally' to spread them out proportionally. Select each in turn, giving them Instance names of 'Life1–8' respectively.



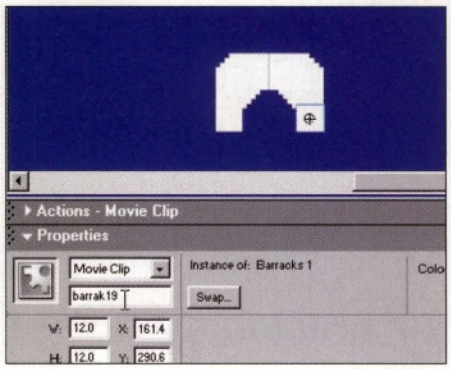
15 Invade my space

In the library are three symbols: Invader1, 2 and 3. Drag each one to the stage, giving them the Instance names in the Properties palette of 'enemy1', 'enemy2' and 'enemy3'. It doesn't matter where you put them as they'll be re-organised by code later.



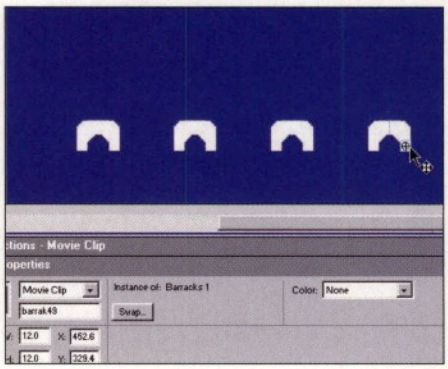
16 Under fire

From the library drag the 'invadershot1' onto the stage three times and name the Instances 'invaderShot1', 'invaderShot2' and 'invaderShot3'. Now drag 'invadershot2' onto the stage and name this Instance 'invaderShot4' in the Property palette.



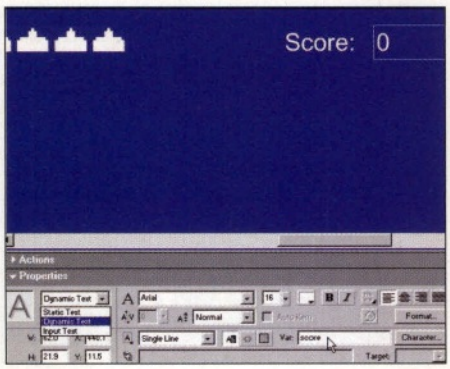
9 Add the last barracks

Add two more copies of 'Barracks 1' to complete the building. Now select the top left block and give it the Instance name of 'barrak10' in the Properties palette. Name the next block 'barrak11' and so on, until the last one, which will be 'barrak19'.



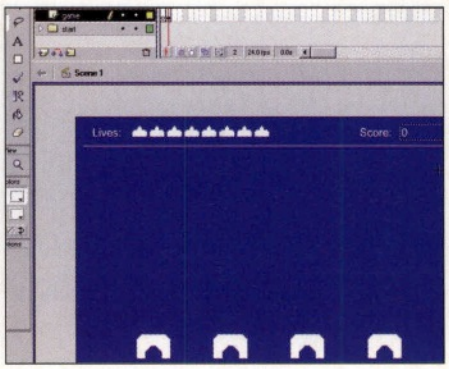
10 Select all

Hold down 'CTRL' + 'A' to select all, then copy the building. Paste it three times and position along the bottom. Rename the barrack Instance names to 'barrak20-29' for the second building, 'barrak30-39' for the third and 'barrack40-49' for the last.



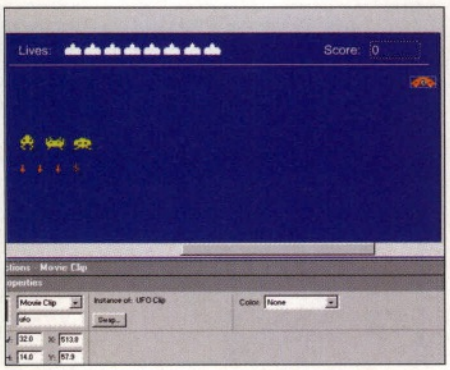
13 He shoots, he scores!

On the right-hand side of the stage use the 'Text' tool to type the word 'Score'. Next to this type another text area with '0' in it. Change the properties of this text to 'Dynamic' with a variable of 'Score'. This will display the current score in the game.



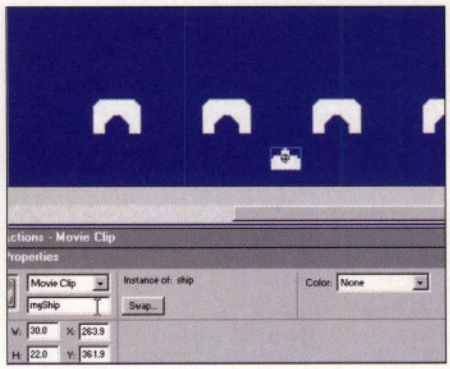
14 White lines

Select the 'Line' tool and change the Stroke colour to 'white'. Hold down 'Shift' to constrain the line horizontally. Draw a line across the stage under the lives and score to section this off from the game area. These elements should be on the same game layer.



17 Last of the bad guys

In the library is a symbol called 'UFO clip'. Drag it to the stage and give it the Instance name of 'ufo'. Drag 'Explode' from the library to the stage and give it the Instance name of 'explode'. Instance names are case sensitive, so ensure you type them correctly.



18 The good guy

Drag the 'Ship' symbol from the library and position it on the stage under the barrack buildings. Place the ship at around '362' on the Y axis in the Properties palette. Give it the Instance name 'myShip'. You may need to adjust the position of the barracks.

Jargon buster

Dynamic text

Dynamic text is a text field which is updated automatically through a variable. The variable in the tutorial is the current score of the player. As points are added to the score, the text box is then dynamically updated to reflect the increase. Dynamic text boxes can also load text from external sources such as text files and databases.

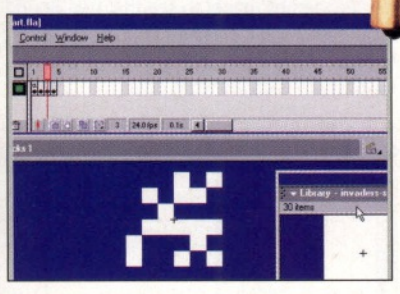
Stage

The stage is the visible area of the SWF when published and it is the size of the movie that will be embedded into the final Web page. If a standalone player such as a Projector file is resized, it is sometimes possible to see items which are not intended to appear at the edge of the stage. Some designers use Mask layers to compensate when publishing in this format.

Frame label

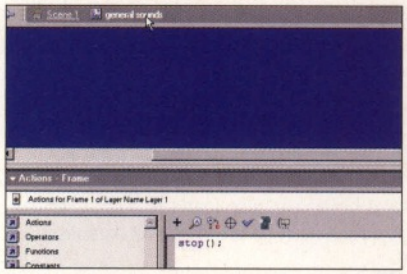
A frame label is a reference to a particular point in a movie or movie clip. It's sometimes easier to reference a label as opposed to a frame, in case you move the content around at a later date. The code doesn't have to be rewritten to reflect the change, as the label will also have moved.

Power users' tip



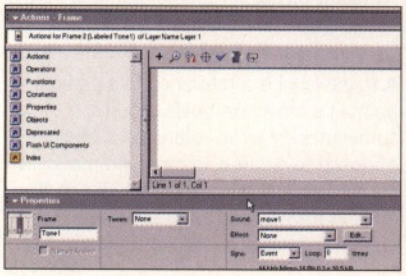
THE THREE BARRACKS movie clips are made individually as blocks, because in the original Space Invaders each block crumbles and disintegrates as the buildings come under fire both from yourself and the enemy. Double-click any of the barracks in the library and you will see a four-frame animation with the various stages of destruction on each of the frames. When shots hit the barracks, the code moves the playhead of the appropriate movie clip over to the next frame, giving the crumbling appearance.

Adding sounds



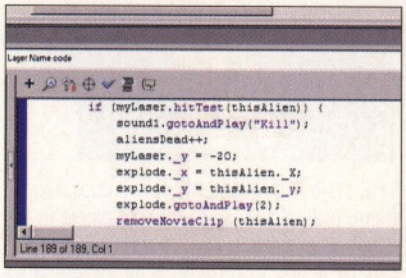
1 General sounds

To create the 'General sounds' movie clip, the sounds are arranged along the timeline with a frame between each of the sounds. In this frame there is a Stop action preventing the playhead from moving forward and playing more than one sound at a time.



2 Labels and sounds

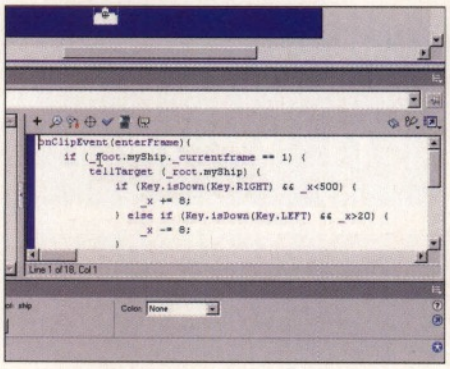
The frames between the Stop commands have the actual sounds on them. Click on one of the frames and then look on the 'Properties' panel to see that the 'Sound' drop menu has a different sound attributed to each of the frames. There is also a frame label which is called from code.



```
if (myLaser.hitTest(thisAlien)) {
    sound1.gotoAndPlay("Kill");
    aliensDead++;
    myLaser._y = -20;
    explode._x = thisAlien._x;
    explode._y = thisAlien._y;
    explode.gotoAndPlay(2);
    removeMovieClip (thisAlien);
```

3 Calling from code

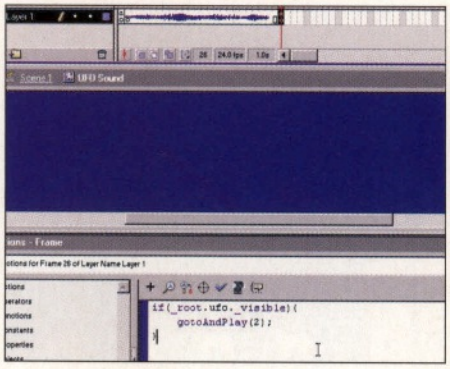
At the key events in the code, such as when an invader is shot down, the appropriate frame label is called and the playhead then moves to the frame and plays the sound. This then stops at the next Stop command before being called again at the next key event.



```
onClipEvent(enterFrame){
    if (_root.myShip._currentframe == 1) {
        tellTarget (_root.myShip) {
            if (Key.isDown(Key.RIGHT) && _x<500) {
                _x += 8;
            } else if (Key.isDown(Key.LEFT) && _x>20) {
                _x -= 8;
            }
```

19 A little ActionScript

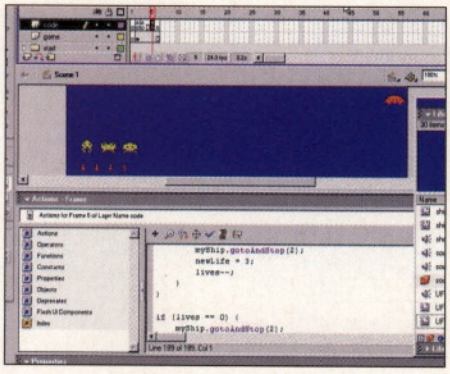
With the ship still selected click the 'Actions' tab above the Properties palette. Open 'step19.txt' from the cover CD and then highlight the text and copy it. Switch back into Flash, position your cursor in the 'Actions' window and then paste the text in.



```
if(_root.ufo._visible){
    gotoAndPlay(2);
```

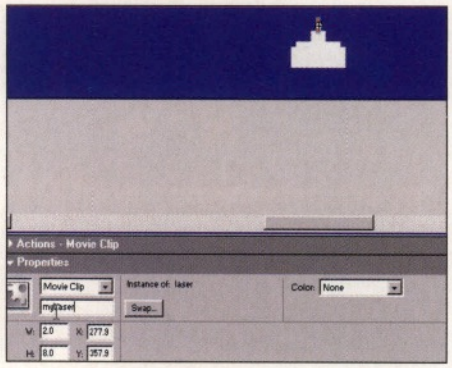
23 Keyframe

Select 'Frame 26' and hit 'F6' to add a keyframe; open the 'Action' panel and copy the code above. This checks to see if the UFO is visible. If it is, the sound is looped on Frame 2; if not, it'll go to Frame 1 and stop, because of the ActionScript there.



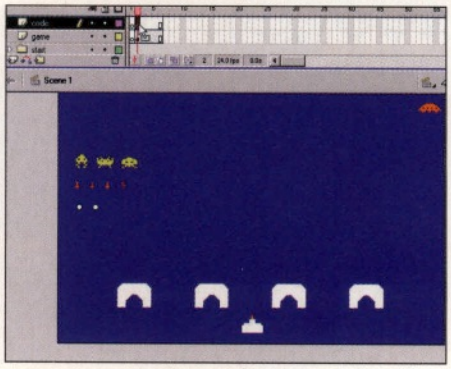
27 The core game

Open the text file 'step27.txt' and copy these actions into the 'Action' panel of Frame 5. This is the core game engine and controls just about every aspect from Collision Detection to Game Over. Now add a frame label of 'Game' in the Properties palette.



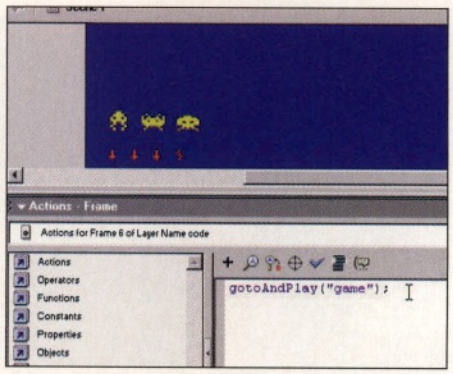
20 Shooting up

We now need to bring in the 'Laser' symbol from the library so we have something to shoot with. Drag it to the stage and place it just above the nose tip of the ship. With the 'Laser' still selected enter an Instance name of 'myLaser' in the Properties palette.



24 Back to the scene

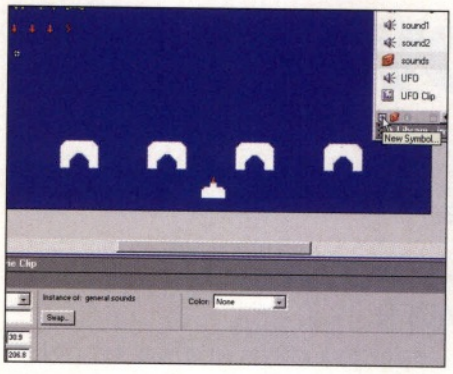
Close the 'Action' panel and return to Scene 1. Drag 'UFO sound' to the stage and name the instance 'sound2'. Select 'Frame 6', hit 'F5' to extend the frames, then create a new layer, naming it 'Code'. Make Frame 2 a keyframe – open the 'Action' panel.



```
gotoAndPlay("game");
```

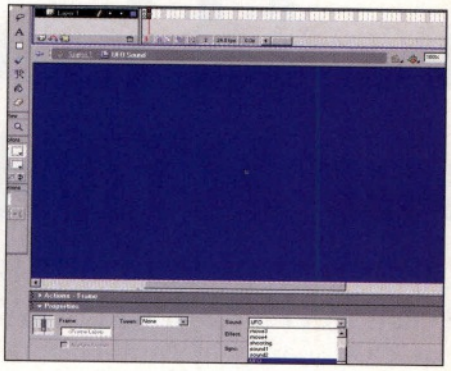
28 Loop the code

Select 'Frame 6' and add a keyframe. Type 'gotoAndPlay("game");' into the frame actions. Select 'Frame 7' and add a keyframe, then add a frame label of 'Game Over' in the Properties palette. In the Game layer pick 'Frame 7'; hit 'F7' to add a blank keyframe.



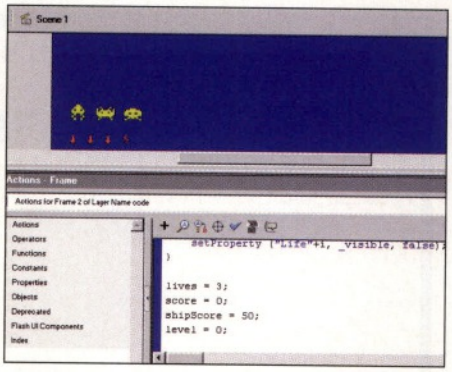
21 Sound me out

Drag the library symbol 'General sounds' to the stage – it should appear as a white circle. Name the Instance 'sound1'. We'll create another sound clip so you can see how this works. Click the 'Plus' icon at the bottom of the library to create a new symbol.



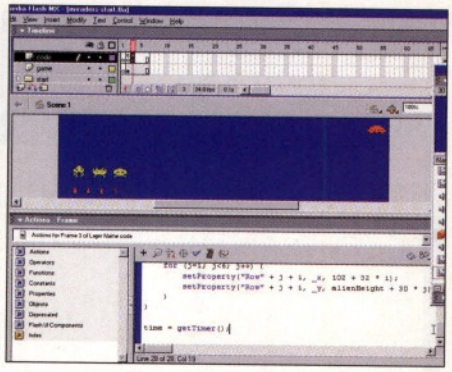
22 A movie clip

Name the new symbol 'UFO sound' and make it a 'Movie Clip'. In Frame 1 open the 'Action' panel and type 'stop();' to keep the playhead on Frame 1. Click 'Frame 2', hit 'F6' to add a keyframe; change sound option from 'None' to 'UFO'.



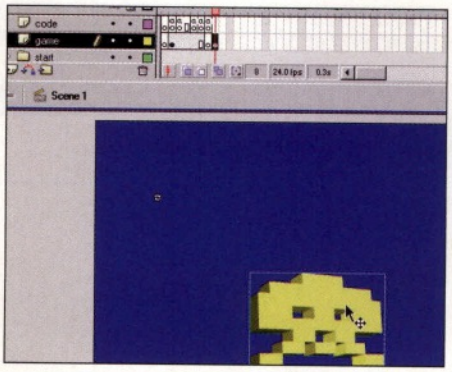
25 Frame actions

Open the file 'step25.txt' from the CD and copy the text; return to Flash and paste it into the 'Action' panel. This ActionScript sets the properties of the enemies and lasers to 'Invisible' on the stage. Hit 'Frame 3' of the Code layer and add a keyframe.



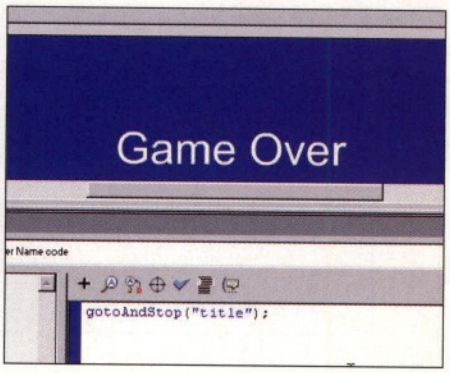
26 More actions

Open 'step26.txt' from the CD and copy and paste this code into the 'Action' panel of Frame 3. These actions set up the initial variables and duplicate the invaders so they're laid out in the usual invaders fashion. Select 'Frame 5' and add a keyframe.



29 Remove invaders

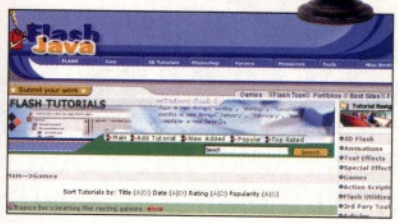
Pick 'Frame 7' of the Code layer; paste in the 'Action' panel the code from 'step29.txt'. This removes the invaders from the screen at the Game Over stage. Select 'Frame 8' of the Game layer; hit 'F6' to add a keyframe. Drag the '3D invader' symbol to the stage.



30 Finishing off

Add text above the invader stating 'Game Over', select 'Frame 60' of the Game layer and press 'F5' to extend the timeline. Pick 'Frame 60' of the Code layer; hit 'F6' to add a keyframe; copy the code as shown. Export the SWF (Shockwave Flash) to play.

Web resources



FlashJava

www.flashjava.com/tutorials/index.php

This site has tons of Flash help and a complete section dedicated to games programming, all broken down into lots of little tutorials which cover a particular aspect of game building. Go through them all and put together the parts you want, so you can create your own Flash game.

TruantDuck

www.truantduck.com

As well as boasting one of the oddest names around, this site has a wide variety of cool games to play. Based largely on the important factors of gameplay and interaction, these are excellent examples of the fine art of creating games using Flash MX.

Power users' tip

EXPORTING THE FLASH file into SWF format so that you can place it on your Web pages is a simple process. Previewing the movie by pressing 'CTRL' + 'ENTER' will actually create an exported movie in the SWF format – however, the settings are just the standard presets. If you want to adjust this in any way, select 'Export Movie' from the File menu. Here you will be prompted for a name for the file and then you'll be taken to the Export screen, where you can add protection settings and compression rates for images and sounds.

In brief:
Task: Learn the fundamentals of meta tags
Software I need: Dreamweaver MX
Difficulty: Pretty straightforward
Time I need: 10 minutes

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

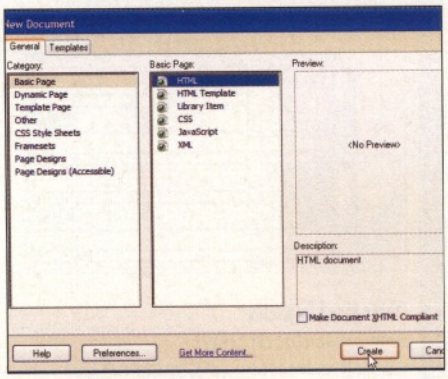
Let the world know about your HTML

MAKE SURE THE SEARCH ENGINES PICK UP YOUR SITE BY TINKERING WITH YOUR HTML'S META DATA WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM DREAMWEAVER

ESTABLISHING YOURSELF ON the Web can be daunting. You could be the creator of the greatest site ever – but how do people find it? The average surfer probably ventures no further than his or her treasured bookmarks, so if they do take the plunge elsewhere, it's your job to reel them in. However, there are trusty Web crawlers such as Google and Yahoo to help you. They should sniff out your site in seconds, but you can give them a head start with something called meta data.

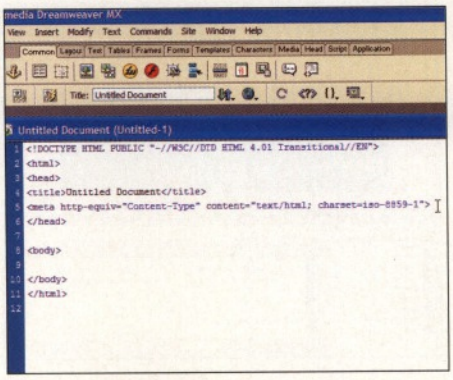
Those familiar with HTML may be acquainted with tags containing the <meta> prefix. They're usually lodged between the <head> tags with the page title, and can be very useful. Many search engines will scan this info rather than the site itself, and will use the text in the 'Description' tag as a page summary. A set of terms can also be declared to generalise site content and provide a reference source for keyword searching.

In this tutorial, a page template is opened in Dreamweaver's code editor and some notable meta tags are written. We'll look at the impact the basic <title> tag has on potential searches and examine how meta tags are used by genuine sites.



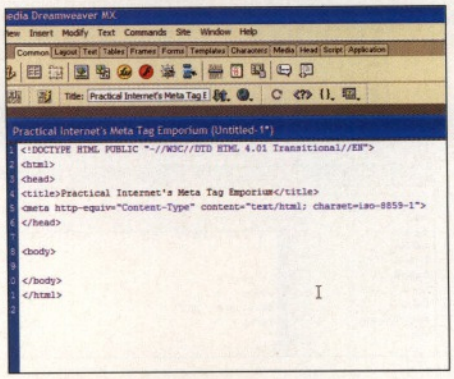
1 New page

Create a new basic page in Dreamweaver by clicking 'File' and 'New' on the main toolbar. A New Document dialog will appear, so click the 'HTML' template under the Basic Page menu. Click 'Create' to generate the new document.



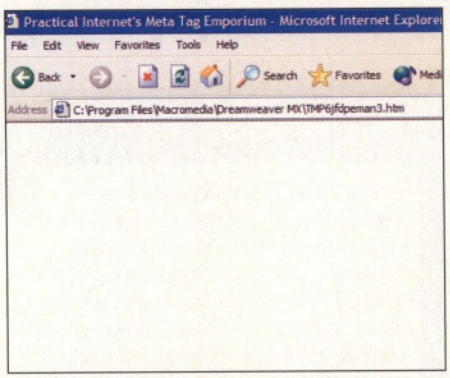
2 View code

Under the View menu of the main toolbar select 'Code', and the HTML for your new page will be shown. Dreamweaver puts in a spine of the most important page tags, including <head> and <body>. However, there's also default <title> and <meta> tags.



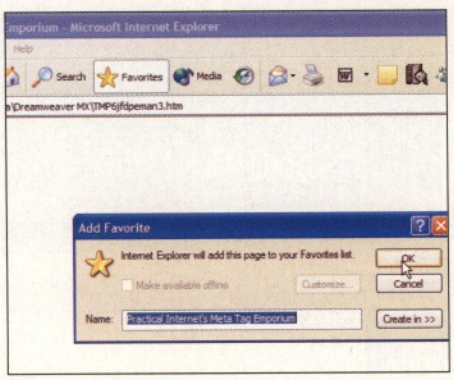
3 Give it a title

One of the first and most important HTML tags, <title> defines a page name in the site. Although not a meta tag, 'title' is displayed in the browser window bar and as a label for a bookmark. Here we'll change the title text to reflect the new page.



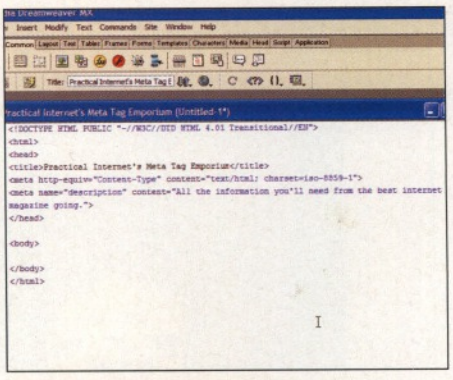
4 Preview in browser

Preview the page within your browser by opening the main 'File' menu and selecting 'Preview In Browser'. Click the desired browser from the pop-up list and the blank page will be loaded. The title is displayed in the top left corner of the browser.



5 Add to Favorites

Before closing the browser click the 'Favorites' icon on the dashboard, then 'Add' on the Favorites panel. An Add Favorite prompt will appear asking for a name, but guess what, it defaults with your page title. Click 'OK' to accept.



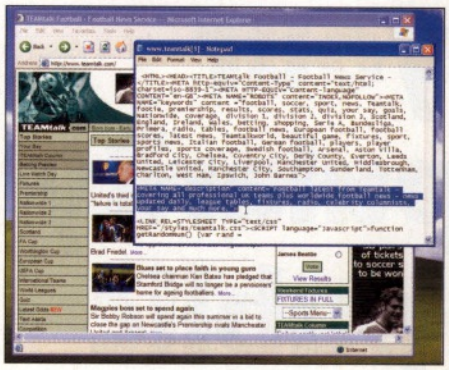
6 Add a description

Return to the code in Dreamweaver and ignore the existing <meta> tag. This gives technical data about page content; below it enter the code as shown above. The Name property defines the type of tag as 'description'; Content has a page summary.

Meta tags

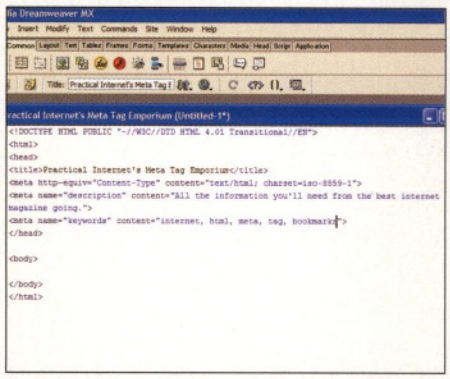
7 Search me

To illustrate the usefulness of specifying the description, point your browser at a search engine and look for a site by entering a keyword. When the site is listed in the results, study the short paragraph shown under the page's title link.



8 Snap!

Click the link to visit the site and see how its HTML looks. Hit 'View' and 'Source' on the browser menu bar to view the page's code in an editor. Find the 'Description' meta tag and check if it tallies with what the search engine displayed; they should match.

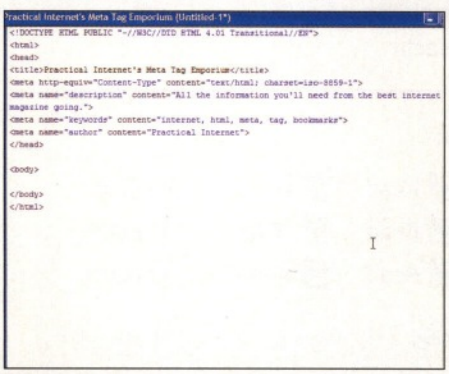


9 Correct your keywords

We'll continue editing our page with a new tag. Below the Description tag, simply do as we did before, but change the meta name to 'keywords' and insert some valid phrases that either feature on your site or that people may use to find it.

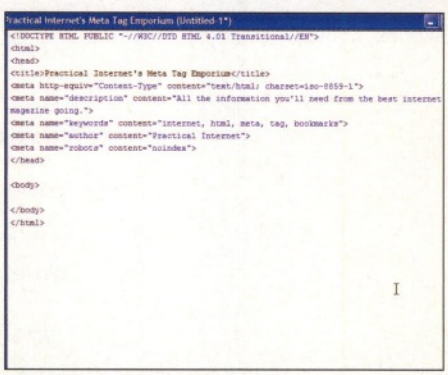
10 In practice

If you refer to the commercial site's code again, you may also find a keyword tag. Some search engines scan this meta data against the keywords given, speeding the process. A rule of thumb is to identify the most common words people search with.



11 Cite the author

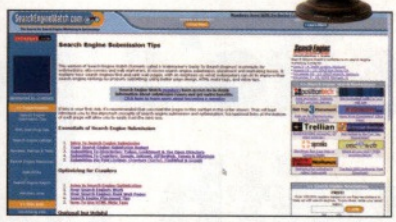
A third tag can be used to specify page authorship. It's slightly odd, as it's seldom recognised by major Web searchers. However, it is a way to put a stamp on your work and can be used to trace site development. Simply enter the tag as shown above.



12 Ignore the robots

This is a useful but grumpy tag that tells search engines to ignore it. Often attributed to the nature of the page content, it could also be used to prevent visitors from bypassing a home page – so to use it in this example would undermine previous tags.

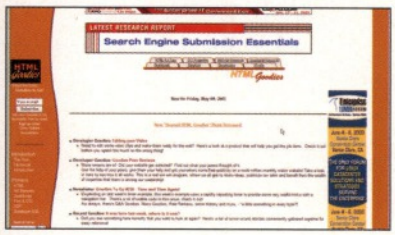
Web resources



Search Engine Watch

www.searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/index.php

This site has been purpose-built for authors, site administrators and marketing execs attempting to promote their Web pages. It informs people about the way that search engines actually operate, so they are able to get the optimum search response. Apart from information on registering your site with a directory, there are plenty of helpful links on using meta tags.



HTML Goodies

www.htmlgoodies.com

Claiming to give free advice and tutorials from 'industry experts', HTML Goodies provides a comprehensive authoring resource. There are brief histories outlined for some of the major Web technologies, plus in-depth lessons in coding standards such as JavaScript and Perl. There is also a search engine, so you will be free to scour its pages for more meta data stuff.

Power users' tip

TO MAKE ENTERING meta data tags easier, Dreamweaver has a quick method. Code can be inserted in the same way as any other page object and performed in two ways. Place the cursor after the title tags and before the closing </head> tag. On the tabbed Insert toolbar containing objects like images and layers, select the 'Head' tab. Hit the first 'Meta' icon on the bar. You can also use the 'Insert' menu on the main bar: select 'Head Tags' and 'Meta'. A mini dialog asks for the tags 'Attribute', 'Value' and 'Content'. Use as before but enter the text in the boxes.

In brief:
Task: Create a custom Web logging system
Software I need: Web server with support for PHP scripts
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

Monitor your site's popularity with the public

HAVEN'T GOT ACCESS TO YOUR WEB SERVER LOGS? DISAPPOINTED ABOUT HOW LITTLE THEY TELL YOU? WE SHOW YOU HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN USING PHP

MONITORING WHO'S VISITED your site and what they've looked at can be really useful, both to see how well your design is working and to get a general idea of the popularity of your pages. Some Web-hosting accounts provide access to the logs made by the server as pages and other site content are downloaded, although these can often be frustratingly uninformative about the most interesting aspects of visiting habits to your site.

For instance, it's rare to have server logs that track an individual visitor's path through your site, or tell you which country the visitor is accessing the site from at a glance. In this tutorial, you'll be shown how to create a simple logging system that gives you information about both these things, in addition to the more standard log contents such as time of visit and the browser software being used.

```
<?

function recordhits($sessionid, $pagevisited, $ip,
    $browser, $refer) {

    $log = fopen("sessions.txt","a");
```

1 The hit recording function

The code shown above is the first part of the 'recordhits' function that logs visits. The first line of code declares the function and imports five pieces of information into named variables. The second line opens the log file, sessions.txt, making it ready for a new log entry to be made.

```
    $countryfile = fopen("http://ip-to-
country.com/get-
country/?ip=$ip&user=guest&password=guest","r"
);
$country = fgets($countryfile,50);
fclose($countryfile);
```

2 Working out the visitor's country

These three lines of code use a free Web-based service that takes an IP address and tells you which country it's from. The first line opens the connection to the Web, the second reads a country name of up to 50 characters into the $country variable, and the third closes the Web connection.

```
recordhits(session_id(), $PHP_SELF, $REMOTE_ADDR,
    $HTTP_USER_AGENT, $HTTP_REFERER);
?>
```

5 More code for each page

This second part of the code to add to each Web page calls the recordhits function and passes it five pieces of required information. These are the session ID number, the URL of the current page, the visiting IP address and Web browser type, and the page from which the visitor linked to reach the current page.

6 Setting up an empty log file

Open up any text editor, create an empty file, and save it as 'sessions.txt'. Upload it, together with the logger.php file, to the root directory of your Web site. In your FTP program, enable 'Read' and 'Write' file permissions as shown above for sessions.txt. This is usually accessed via the Get Info or Properties Menu options.

In a nutshell, this system works by adding a chunk of PHP code to the top of each page on your site where you want visits to be logged. This calls on a PHP function stored in a separate file, which then stores the details of the visitor in a log. To aid with tracking the path of individual visitors through the site, PHP's session system is used to allocate each visitor a unique ID number that is recorded to the log. By looking at only the entries for a particular ID number, you can trace that visitor's path through your pages and work out how long they stayed at the site.

The original version of this logging system was featured in a tutorial back in issue 69, and this fresh look takes into account the feedback we received from readers following that. In particular, there were concerns about how necessary it was to use a MySQL database to store the access data. This time around we've gone for a simple comma-separated text file as the log format, which allows easy importing of the file into a spreadsheet package for analysis.

A couple of additional logging features have also been added, such as using the country detection database at **ip-to-country.com** to log where the visitor is accessing the site from. One other key concern from reader feedback has been listened to, and as a result the tutorial includes guidance on how to apply the logging system to your site without having to rename all your Web pages with a PHP extension. This was quite inconvenient as it required all internal links to be altered, as well as invalidating any direct external links to the site. The new workaround is specific to Web servers which support the HTACCESS configuration file and where you have permission to use this configuration method to alter which pages are treated as PHP.

Jargon buster

PHP

Hypertext Pre-Processor is a popular Web technique that's now offered by most paid-for Web hosts. It's a powerful scripting language that's easy to learn, especially if you're familiar with JavaScript or Perl.

Session

One of the new features in PHP4 is the ability to track users through sessions, so they can be identified and treated 'personally' when they visit the site. Sessions are a combination of technologies, and function best when the user's browser supports cookies. You can set up sessions so they persist between visits, and work out how regularly a visitor returns.

```
        $now = date("d F Y h:i:s A");

        fwrite($log,"$now,$sessionid,$pagevisited,$ip,
        $country,$browser,$refer\n");
        $log = fclose($log);

}

?>
```

3 Writing the log entry

The first line stores the current date and time into the $now variable. The second writes a line to the log file opened in step one, with all the info we've collected, followed by a carriage return (\n). The third closes the log file. The contents of steps one to three should be saved in a file called 'logger.php'.

```
<?php
require 'logger.php';
session_start();
```

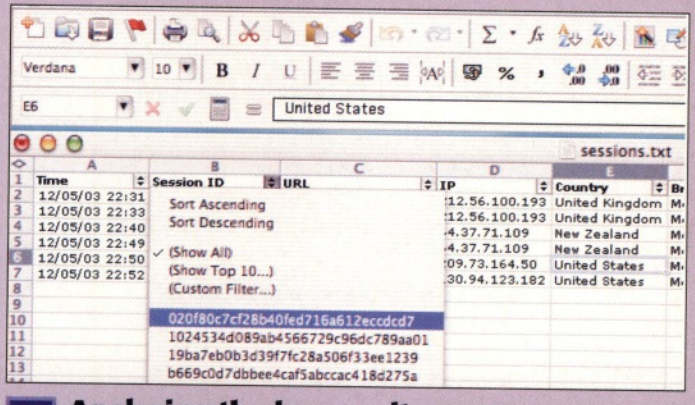
4 Code to put on each Web page

We need to add some code to each of the Web pages to be monitored. The code above should be added at the very top of each of the pages, before the <html> tag. If logger.php is not in the same directory, change the 'require' line to refer to its path relatively, eg require '../somefolder/logger.php'.

```
AddType application/x-httpd-php .php .html .htm
```

7 Running PHP on Web pages

The single line of code above should be saved into a file called '.htaccess' which needs to be uploaded to each directory of your Web site where you want to log entries. This will enable them to be executed as PHP files rather than just being served as normal Web pages. Otherwise, the logging won't work at all.



8 Analysing the log results

When the system is up and running, access a few pages on your site and download the sessions.txt file. Open it using a spreadsheet, which should recognise it as a comma separated file. In the Excel pic above, the AutoFilter command is used to isolate sessions, to analyse visitors' paths through the site.

In brief:
Task: Validate form data with JavaScript
Software I need: Text editor and Microsoft Explorer or Netscape Navigator
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 30 minutes

Validate form data using JavaScript code

HANDLING FORM DATA WITH JAVASCRIPT CAN BE TRICKY, BUT IF YOU DO IT CORRECTLY IT CAN SAVE YOU MONEY AND MAKE YOUR SCRIPTS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE. HERE'S HOW

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

GETTING DATA FROM a user is a complicated business. There are a number of ways it can be done, but only one is tried and tested. The form lets users enter information and submit it to the server, where it can be processed and handled in a variety of ways. This does present problems, as users can enter just about anything, and you can guarantee that someone, somewhere is going to type something completely unexpected.

Since programs can't handle any and every type of data, it's necessary to restrict the kind to be entered. You can do this by checking the form data once it's submitted and returning error messages if it doesn't meet certain criteria.

There are two ways to validate form data. One is writing a server-side script (using a language like PHP, ASP or JSP) to handle the form once it's submitted to the server; the other involves checking the data before it's submitted to the

```
<html><head><title>The Form</title>   </head>
<style>
body {  font-size:10pt; }
.star {  color:red; }
.tips {  color:#666666; font-size:7pt; }
    #errmsg {  color:red; font-family:courier new; }
</style>
<script language=' javascript'
    src=' validation.js' ></script>
<body>
<form action=' script.php'  method=' post'  onSubmit='
this.name.optional = true;
this.postcode.optional = true;
this.username.minlen = 6;
this.username.maxlen = 16;
this.password.minlen = 8;
this.password.maxlen = 12;
return validate(this);' >
```

1 The HTML

Create a new HTML text file named 'form.html' and enter the above code. Note we've put in a <script> tag with the src property set to point to the script file that will be handling the form validation. We've also created a <form> tag which calls the validate() function when the user tries to submit it.

```
    <p id=' errmsg' ></p>
    <p>Username <span class=' star' >*</span><br>
    <input type=' text'  size=' 20'  name=' username'
    minlen=6
maxlen=16 optional=' no' ><br>
    <span class=' tips' >Your username must be over
    6 and under
16 characters long.  Please use alphanumeric
characters.</span></p>
    <p>Password <span class=' star' >*</span><br>
<input type=' password'  size=' 20'  name=' password'
    minlen=8 maxlen=12 optional=' no' ><br>
Confirm Password <span class=' star' >*</span><br>
<input type=' password'  size=' 20'  name=' cpassword'
    optional=' no' ><br>
<span class=' tips' >Your should be over 8 and
    under 12 characters long. Be sure it includes
    both digits and letters.</span></p>
```

2 The form

This is the first part of our form. It's pretty standard as forms go, but you should probably note the extra properties we've added to the <input> tags in the <form> tag above. These include optional, minlen and maxlen. These will be used by our validate() function to check the form data.

```
    for (var i = 0; i < f.length; i++) {
      e = f.elements[ i] ;
      if (!e.value == null || !e.value == "") {
            if (e.minlen && e.value.length <
    e.minlen) {
                  err = 1;
err_msg = err_msg + "Please ensure your " +
e.name + " is over " + e.minlen + " characters
    long.<br>"; }
            if (e.maxlen && (e.value.length >
    e.maxlen)) {
                  err = 1;
err_msg = err_msg + "Please ensure your " +
e.name + " is under " + e.maxlen + " characters
    long.<br>"; } } }
```

5 Checking minimum and maximum length

This part of the script checks each input element (or rather those that are not empty) to see if it has a minlen or maxlen attribute, then checks to see if the input element is shorter than the minlen and longer than the maxlen. If it is, the script creates the relevant error message.

```
if (!f.username.value == null || !f.username.value
    == "") {
      var un_string = f.username.value;
      var username = /^[ a-zA-Z0-9_] +$/;
      var result = un_string.match(username);
      if (result == null) {
            err = 1;
err_msg = err_msg + "Your username must only con-
    tain alphanumeric or the underslash.<br>"; } }
if ((((!f.password.value == null &&
    !f.cpassword.value == null) ||
    (!f.password.value == "" && !f.cpassword.value
    == "")) && (f.password.value !=
    f.cpassword.value)) {
    err = 1;
err_msg = err_msg + "Your passwords does not
    match. You must confirm your password.<br>"; }
```

6 Validating username and password

If the user has entered the relevant data, our script will compare the username to a regular expression to ensure it doesn't contain illegal characters, outputting an error message if it does. It then compares the password and the password confirmation to see if they're identical. If not, it outputs an error message.

server using a client-side script (such as JavaScript). There are strengths and weaknesses in both options. Using a server-side script, it's possible to check data against information currently held in the database (eg check to see if a username has already been selected). It's also possible to perform secure tests that are hidden from the user. Unfortunately, this takes up processing time, and if someone has to re-submit info repeatedly, can be extremely inefficient.

The alternative

Using a client-side script (such as JavaScript) it's possible to check data before the user submits it, making sure usernames and passwords are submitted in the correct format, checking to see if the postcode meets certain format restrictions, and ensuring that the user has entered all relevant info as and where needed. Unfortunately, it can't perform advanced data checks or filter data effectively, and can be bypassed by hackers.

A good programmer will use a combination of both these methods to check form data, saving server processing power and ensuring that the relevant data has been sent to the server.

The script below uses JavaScript to check various different types of form data in a number of ways. Part of the script below uses Regular Expressions. These are an extremely powerful way of checking that data conforms to a set pattern, and while they are rather complicated, they can be employed extremely effectively.

The script is far from being a comprehensive list of form validation techniques, but does give you a good idea of how form validation can be done with JavaScript, and includes a number of techniques which could prove very useful once you adapt them to your requirements.

Jargon buster

Bandwidth

The amount of data that can be sent from the server to the client (or vice versa) in a set period of time. Most Web hosting services restrict bandwidth to a set figure, and if you go over this it can be very costly. For smaller sites, bandwidth isn't a big issue, but larger enterprises that receive a regular number of visitors can quickly use up their bandwidth.

Server

A computer that offers a service over the Net – anything from handling email to hosting files. Usually describes powerful computers offering commercial/enterprise level services like Web hosting, scripting and Net access.

```
    <p>Name<br>
<input type='text' size='30' name='name'
    optional='yes'></p>
    <p>Post Code<br>
<input type='text' size='8' name='postcode' option-
    al='yes'></p>
    <p><button type='submit'>Submit</button></p>
    </form>
</body>
</html>
```

3 Submitting the form

Rounding off the form doesn't require anything special. Since we've put the onsubmit event handler in the <form> tags at the beginning of the Web page, we just need to put in a standard <button type='submit'> or <input type='submit'> tag. Save the file and create a new text file named 'validation.js'.

```
function validate(f) {
    var err = 0;
    var err_msg = "";
    for (var i = 0; i < f.length; i++) {
      e = f.elements[i];
if (!e.optional && (e.value == null || e.value ==
    "")) {
            err = 1; }      }
    if (err) {
err_msg = err_msg + "You haven't entered required
    information.<br>"; }
```

4 Validation function

This is the JavaScript that we will be using to validate the script. The validate() function will handle the vast majority of the validation. The first part checks to see if those input elements with the optional property set to 'no' are empty. If they are, it creates an error message.

```
if (!f.postcode.value == null || !f.postcode.value
    == "") {
    var pc_str = f.postcode.value;
var postcode = /^\[a-zA-z]{1,2}\d{1,2}\[a-zA-
    Z]?\s\d\[a-zA-Z]{2}$/;
    var result = pc_str.match(postcode);
    if (result == null) {
      err = 1;
err_msg = err_msg + "The postcode has not been
    entered correctly.<br>"; } }
```

7 Validating the postcode

Last but not least, the script checks the postcode. Since this is optional, it can be left blank, but if entered we want to ensure it matches the relevant format. We do this using a regular expression, albeit a somewhat more complicated one than that used in step six. If it doesn't match, the script outputs an error message.

```
if (err) {
error_message(err_msg);
return false; } }

function error_message(err_msg) {
v4 = (parseInt(navigator.appVersion)>=4 &&
    parseInt(navigator.appVersion)<=5)?1:0;
ie = (navigator.appName == "Microsoft Internet
    Explorer" && v4)?1:0;
ns = (navigator.appName == "Netscape" && v4)?1:0;
if (ie) { errmsg = document.all["errmsg"]; }
if (ns) { errmsg =
    document.getElementById("errmsg"); }
errmsg.innerHTML = "The following errors
    occurred:<br><br>" + err_msg; }
```

8 Error messages and returns

Once all the validation is done, the script checks to see if an error has occurred (we've kept tabs on this using the err variable). If one has occurred it calls the error_message() function (which outputs our error messages) and returns false. This stops the <form> tag from submitting the info before it's been changed.

In brief:
Task: Create an administration application for your catalogue using MySQL and PHP
Software I need: Notepad, IE4+ or NS4+, and a server that supports MySQL and PHP
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 45 minutes

PART THREE

Put the finishing touches to your online catalogue

THE THIRD AND FINAL PART OF OUR PHP ECOMMERCE TUTORIAL SHOWS HOW TO CREATE AN ADMIN APPLICATION TO TAKE THE TROUBLE OUT OF UPDATING YOUR CATALOGUE

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

WELCOME TO THE final part of our tutorial on creating a catalogue with PHP. We've done most of the grunt work already, putting together the catalogue itself and the shopping trolley software, but we still need to create an administration application. This will be an online app that will let you add products to the database and remove them without having to code them in by hand.

We recommend you put a form of security on the pages housing this application. After all, you don't want just anyone changing your catalogue as they see fit. Coding a password-protected site is outside the scope of this article, but we will be revisiting this subject in a couple of months.

Why build it?

Building an administration application is optional. It's possible to maintain and update a database-driven Web site by accessing it directly and

```
<html><head><title>Catalogue Admin</title> <?
@ $db = mysql_pconnect(); mysql_select_db("catalogue");
function list_products() { echo "<h2>Product List</h2>";
$types_rs = mysql_query("select * from types");
for ($a = 0; $a < mysql_num_rows($types_rs); $a++) {
$types = mysql_fetch_array($types_rs);
echo "<h3>".$types["name"]."</h3>";
$products_rs = mysql_query("select * from products where
  type = ".$types["typeid"]);
if (mysql_num_rows($products_rs)) {
echo "<table cellpadding='2' class='pt'>";
echo "<tr><td class='hd'>Name</td><td class='hd'>Description
  </td>"; echo "<td class='hd'>Price</td><td
  class='hd'>Image</td><td class='hd'>Delete</td></tr>"; }
else { echo "<div class='none'>No products of this type. ";
echo "Click <a href='admin?act=delete&typ=type&id="
  .$types["typeid"]."'>here</a> to delete.</div>"; }
```

1 Connecting to the database

Other than the initial HTML, the first thing we need to do is open up a persistent database connection with mysql_pconnect. Then we set about creating a function that will list all the products and types that are currently available in our database.

```
for ($b = 0; $b < mysql_num_rows($products_rs); $b++) {
$products = mysql_fetch_array($products_rs); echo "<tr><td
  class='n'>".StripSlashes($products["name"])." </td>";
echo "<td class='d'>".StripSlashes($products["description"])
."</td>"; echo "<td class='p'>£".$products["price"]."</td>";
if ($products["image"]) { echo "<td class='i'><a
  href='products/".$products["productid"].".jpg'
  target='_new'>Yes</a></td>"; } else {
echo "<td class='i'>No</td>"; } echo "<td class='p_opts'>";
echo "<a href='admin.php?act=delete&typ=product&id="
  .$products["productid"]."'>Delete</a></td></tr>"; }
echo "</table>"; } ?> <p><button type='button' onClick=
'location.href = "admin.php?act=create&item=Product";'>
  Create Product</button>  <button type='button'
    onClick=
  'location.href = "admin.php?act=create&item=Type";'>Create
  Type</button></p> <? } ?>
```

2 Listing the products

We search to see which products exist for each product type, and list these products under the appropriate category. We also output all the relevant information on each product, including price, description and a link to the image, before giving the administrator the option of deleting this record.

```
<? $types_rs = mysql_query("select typeid, name from types");
for ($a = 0; $a < mysql_num_rows($types_rs); $a++) {
$types = mysql_fetch_array($types_rs);
echo "<option value='".$types["typeid"]."'>".$types["name"]
  ."</option>"; } ?>
</select></td></tr><tr><td>Image</td><td>
<input type='hidden' name='MAX_FILE_SIZE' value='100000'>
<input name='pimage' type='file'></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan=2 class='tips'>Please be sure to upload
only JPG images, of less than 20kb.</td></tr><?} else {?>
<tr><td colspan=2 class='tips'>Product type names can be
a maximum of 30 characters in length.</td></tr> <? } ?>
<tr><td>Description</td>
<td><textarea cols=40 rows=10 name='description'>
</textarea></td></tr></table>
<input type='submit' value='Create <?=$_GET["item"]?>'>
</form> <? break;
```

5 Types and files

If we're creating a product, we should check the type categories and list them in <option> tags. We'll also have to give the user a chance to upload an image. The hidden <input> tag named 'MAX_FILE_SIZE' is a prerequisite, but it's the <input type='file'> that does all the work.

```
case "insert" :
$q = mysql_query("select * from ".$_POST["item"]."s where
  name = '".AddSlashes($_POST["name"])."'");
if (mysql_num_rows($q)) {
echo "Name already in use.";
break; }
if ($_POST["item"] == "Product") {
if (!eregi("^[0-9]+\.[0-9]{2}$", $_POST["price"]) ||
  strlen($_POST["name"]) > 50 || !$_POST["name"] ||
  !$_POST["description"]) { echo "Error in your input."; }
else { if ($HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"]["tmp_name"]) {
if ($HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"] == "none" ||
  $HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"]["size"] == 0 ||
  $HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"]["type"] != "image/pjpeg" ||
  !is_uploaded_file($HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"]["tmp_name"]))
{ echo "Error in image upload."; break; }
else { $image = 1; } } else { $image = 0; }
```

6 Checking the data

Before we can insert data into our database or accept a file upload, we need to give it a thorough check. First we use various tests (including regular expressions) to check the format of the data. Then we check the image file (if one exists) to make sure it's kosher.

adding, deleting and editing products as you see fit. However, this can be a little time-consuming, certainly isn't very intuitive, and limits how and where you can update the site. Building an administrative app allows you to see all the info in one place, update the site from anywhere with a Net connection, and (perhaps more important) give administrative powers to those who aren't as code-savvy as you – people who wouldn't be able to access MySQL directly and tap in the code to add or delete new products.

One interesting function of the administration application is the ability to 'upload' an image file to the server. The image file is selected using a form, and the resulting image is passed through the HTTP header to the next page, which checks the image, processes it, then copies it to the server. The same principle can be applied to any number of different files, but there are a few security issues you should be aware of. The code in step six deals with checking the uploaded file to ensure it is safe. Be sure to use all of these tests when you are creating code to upload files. It's possible for unscrupulous hackers to upload files that aren't quite what you expect, and which can have any number of unwanted side effects.

The application in a nutshell

This is a relatively basic administrative utility. It allows an administrator to create new products or product categories, and to delete products that are no longer needed. There are many other utilities that could be incorporated into this script (if we had time and space) but we've decided to leave that to you. As always, you're encouraged to tinker with this script, to chop, change, experiment and find out exactly what makes it tick. That's the best way to learn a new programming language, after all.

Jargon buster

Application

A program that performs a task. Normally, this isn't much of a distinction and applies to most programs, but when programming for the Web, the difference between a script and an application is more pronounced. While a script can be just one page, an application is a number of pages (or one page which performs a number of tasks), all working in tandem.

Switch

A statement that can be very useful in a script. It takes one variable as an argument, then lets you write any pieces of script to handle a number of possible eventualities. This is far better than having a lot of 'if' statements.

```
<style> td { vertical-align:top;}
.pt td { font-size:10pt;background:#DDDDAA;}
.pt .hd { background:#AADDDD;font-weight:bold;}
.n { width:20%} .d { width:65%} .p { width:5%;}
.o { width:10%} .i { width:5%}
.tips { font-size:7pt;} </style></head>
<body><h1>Catalogue Administration</h1>
<? switch ($_GET["act"]) {
case "delete" :
$products = mysql_fetch_array(mysql_query("select image
  from products where productid = '".$_GET["id"]."'"));
if ($products["image"]) {
unlink("products/".$_GET["id"].".jpg"); }
$q = mysql_query("delete from ".$_GET["typ"]."s where
  ".$_GET["typ"]."id = '".$_GET["id"]."'");
list_products();
break;
```

3 Styles and switches

While looks aren't everything, we want our page to be readable, so we've made use of a small style sheet. Once this is done, we start the script proper, using a switch statement to sort through the URL extensions in order to find out what action needs to be performed.

```
case "create" : ?>
<h2>Create <?=$_GET["item"]?></h2>
<p>Enter all the relevant details below, and click 'Create
<?=$_GET["item"]?>' to proceed.</p>
<form enctype='multipart/form-data' action='admin.php?
  act=insert' method='post'>
<input type='hidden' name='item' value='<?=$_GET["item"]?>'>
<table width=500><tr><td><?=$_GET["item"]?> Name</td>
<td><input type='text' width='50' name='name'></td></tr>
<? if ($_GET["item"] == "Product") { ?>
<tr><td colspan=2 class='tips'>Product names can be a
maximum of 50 characters in length.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Price</td>
<td>£ <input type='text' size='5' name='price'></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan=2 class='tips'>Prices must have 2 floating
points after them. Be sure only to enter numeric characters.
</td></tr><tr><td>Type</td><td><select name='type'>
```

4 Creating a product or type

This part of the script outputs a form through which you can create new products or product types. The script will ask for the relevant information needed in order to create either a product or a product type, tailoring its output according to which is requested.

```
$q = mysql_query("insert into products values (NULL, '".
  $_POST["type"]."', '".AddSlashes($_POST["name"])."',
  '".nl2br(AddSlashes($_POST["description"]))."', '"
  .$_POST["price"]."', ".$image.")");
if ($image) { $products = mysql_fetch_array(
  mysql_query("select productid from products where
  name = '".$_POST["name"]."'"));
 if (!copy($HTTP_POST_FILES["pimage"]["tmp_name"],
  "products/".$products["productid"].".jpg")) {
echo "File not uploaded."; break; } } }
```

7 Inserting the data

Now we've checked the data we've received, we can place it in the database. We'll also put the image (if it was uploaded) into our Products folder, using the product's ID as the filename. This way it will be easy to reference in our other scripts.

```
if ($_POST["item"] == "Type") {
if (strlen($_POST["name"]) > 30 || !$_POST["name"] ||
 !$_POST["description"]) { echo "Error in your input."; }
else {
$q = mysql_query("insert into types values (NULL, '"
  .AddSlashes($_POST["name"])."', '"
  .nl2br(AddSlashes($_POST["description"]))."')"); } }
list_products();
break;
default: list_products(); } ?>
</body></html>
```

8 Ending the script

This last piece of script deals with type-related data. We'll check the data as we did with the product, and then insert it into our database. Once this is done, we'll call list_products() once more, and then close the switch. Last, but not least, tie off the HTML with the relevant closing tags.

Q&A
Webmaster Q&A

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**

The cool people are grooving on down at the Google barn dance

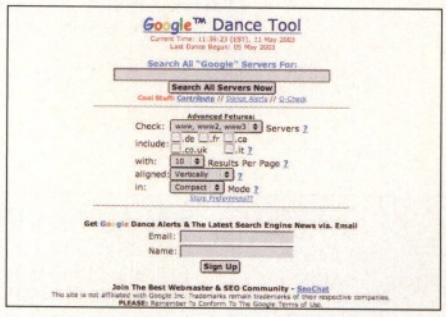
Dancing in Google's aisles

Q I'm keen to understand how search engines rank my site, and read online that something called the 'Google dance' is instructive in such matters as far as that leading engine is concerned. Can you shed any light on what this is and whether it can really help me improve my site's rankings? Does it involve Angela Rippon?

Dan Bush

A **A lot of attention is paid to how Google produces search results, as it is viewed by many as the authoritative index for the Web. So people who are keen on getting the best results on Google pay close attention to the monthly event which has been unofficially christened the 'Google dance'. This is when the Google index is updated with the results of the 'deep crawl' which continuously wanders the Web looking for changes to pages and new sites.**

As the index is massive, the change can take some days, during which time the rankings given to sites can fluctuate considerably. It's not what happens during the dance which really matters – it's the difference between rankings given to sites at the start and end of the process. For search-obsessed site owners, the dance is the monthly verdict on how successful they've been in boosting their site's rankings in the preceding month. Success is mainly achieved by getting a site linked to from other sites which are seen by Google as important and reliable. When the findings of the deep crawl are reconciled they create a new PageRank value, which is the key to determining how high a site appears in search result rankings.



*During the Google dance you can use the tools at **www.google-dance.com** to see how your ranking changes*

You can read more about the dance at www.webworkshop.net/google_dance.html and then sign up for notification of the dance starting at www.google-dance.com. You can catch up on the latest salacious dance world gossip (I kid you not!) at sites such as www.seochat.com.

To understand the Google dance more thoroughly, you should read up about PageRank – the official story is at www.google.com/technology, and there are various concerned accounts (which can read a little like conspiracy theories) at www.google-watch.org.

If you're feeling left out of the dance, it may be a result of not having a listing at the Open Directory. This can easily be remedied by finding the category appropriate to your site at www.dmoz.org and clicking the 'Add URL' link at the top of the page.

Reader's tip

Regaining the muse

I don't know whether other Web designers have the same problem, but sometimes when I sit down to create a new site, the ideas are just not there. Perhaps this is a modern version of writer's block? One friend suggested that I cure this by looking at other sites on the Net, but this approach tended to wind up with me spending hours aimlessly meandering around the Web.

Thankfully, on one such occasion, I happened across a fantastic site that has proved invaluable in curing my lack of inspiration without delay – **www.coolhomepages.com**. Basically it does exactly what it says on the tin, by featuring good-looking sites and regularly updating its selections. It's particularly suited to designers, as sites are categorised based on the sort of techniques they use rather than their content theme. I hope you can give this site a mention as I think it would really help other readers in a similar predicament to me!

Maria Schofield

Secure server shocker

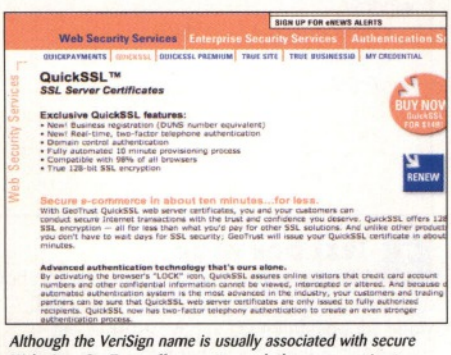
Q I wanted to check out whether there's a secure server installed on my Web site so I went to my domain name but with https:// instead of http:// at the start of the address. Imagine my surprise when someone else's site appeared, with my address still listed! I can even navigate around this 'secure' site with my address forming part of the URL. What on earth is going on and does this mean I can't have a secure server set up on my domain?

Jessica van der Hoff

A **This is a strange but common problem associated with the widely used 'virtual hosting' method used on many Web servers. As you may know, the friendly Web addresses we type into our browsers must be translated into IP addresses in order for your computer to connect to the desired Web site. Virtual hosting is a technique where multiple Web sites share one IP address. This is useful for two quite different reasons – the first being that IP addresses are often in short supply, and the second that some computers used to host Web sites can't be assigned multiple IP addresses.**

Normally the virtual hosting situation is completely transparent, because the server works out which is the correct site to provide, based on the address being requested. You'd only notice it if you tried typing the IP address for your site into a Web browser, in which case you may get some other site or just an error page.

So, the reason this is different in the secure server situation you describe is that your site address doesn't currently have a secure server installed on it. Some configuration issue (or lack of configuration) on the Web server in question has meant that you were served the secure site for one of the other domains which share your IP address. This shouldn't be a barrier to you setting up a secure server on your domain, as issuers of secure server certificates such as www.geotrust.com/quickssl are wise to the commonplace usage of virtual hosting.



Although the VeriSign name is usually associated with secure Web sites, GeoTrust offers pretty much the same service to people for a fraction of the price

Antique browser dilemma

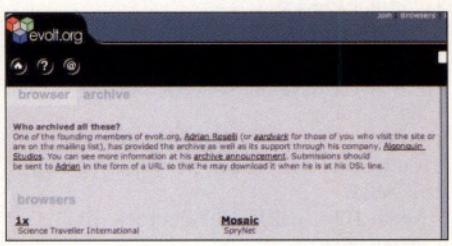
Q I'm always reading in *Practical Internet* about how it's important to design pages that work in old browsers. But I don't really see why I should worry about people using ancient software any more than snooker commentators care about people with black and white televisions. And if I were to try and achieve this, how would I know that my efforts have been successful? I keep my software updated!

Sam Hunter

A **Although the phrase 'old browsers' may sometimes have crept into these pages, the main priority in designing sites is that they work with a wide range of currently available browsers, with a particular emphasis on those that don't feature the latest technologies. This is not always because of a backwards approach to progress, but rather that the user or the browser or the platform used to power the software cannot support the technology for whatever reason.**

For example, Flash animations are of little use to a visually impaired Web user, and SVG graphics don't really concern someone surfing the Web via the black and white screen of their personal organiser. The basic guidance in all such cases is always to check that your site complies with the relevant Web standards, using online tools like validator.w3.org.

Returning to the issue of antique browser software – it can be in the best interests of a business selling goods online to make its site friendly to old browsers, which is something that JavaScript-reliant eCommerce solutions often fail to do. There are a surprising number of people out there who don't update their software, often because they don't know there's a need to do so. It's possible to see what your site looks like through the eyes of older browsers by downloading one from the museum-style archive kept at browsers.evolt.org.



*The Web browser answer to the British Library can be found at **browsers.evolt.org**. The other offerings of **www.evolt.org** are also worth a look!*

Self-assembly Web sites

Q Being a fan of DIY who's recently managed to install the final part of my MFI kitchen, I thought it was about time to start on a new and slightly less energetic project by making a DIY Web site. Unlike the kitchen, I've →

Readers' sites

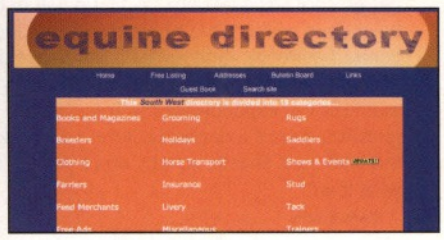
Share your site with us – send the URL to **helpdesk@paragon.co.uk**

The Personal Design Journal

URL: www.smithpaul.com
Creator: Paul Smith
This blog by a Web designer is aimed at other designers – so it's lucky Paul's design is good, or he'd be opening himself to a whole new world of flaming from disgruntled designers. It focuses on commenting about designs that have caught Paul's eye, and gives some personal background.

Make A Date

URL: www.make-a-date.org
Creator: Justin
This site is for just one of the networks springing up in the UK, and offers speed dating in the South East of England. It's well designed, if a little plain. The question is when we will see Net-based speed dating, complete with video conferencing.



Equine Directory

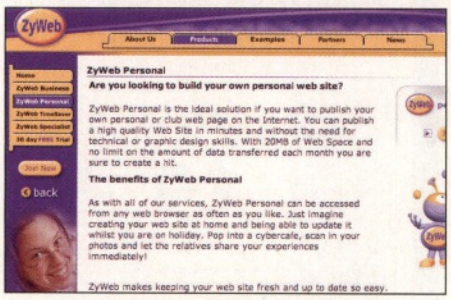
URL: www.equine-directory.com
Creator: Frannee
Slightly strange, but worth a mention for being very successful in providing comprehensive coverage of its subject matter. The choice of colours and graphic design is not good, but this is a fine example of how independent builders can do a better job than scarily huge Net directories.

Q&A
Webmaster Q&A

noticed that there are no self-assembly instructions included with the trial copy of Dreamweaver I've installed! I'm not really confident enough to start a site from scratch, so could you recommend a more MFI-like way forward for me?

Alex Porter

A **It can be very daunting to start a Web site from scratch, even when you're a seasoned designer – see this issue's Reader's Tip panel if you need proof of that! There are various ways you can get a leg-up into the site creation game, the most obvious being to download and adapt a Web site template. Sites such as www.freesitetemplates.com and www.oswd.org provide these for free, and you can buy more highly specified designs from places like www.templatemonster.com. All these still rely on you having a working knowledge of a design package such as Dreamweaver, or alternatively the ability to manually alter the template code to fit your needs.**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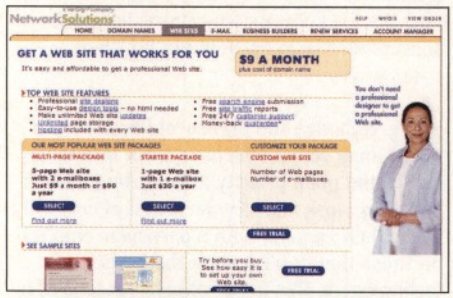
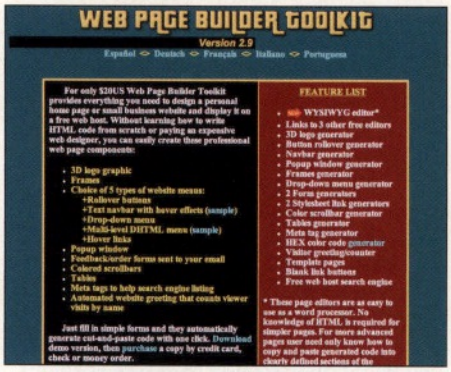
*Pay a modest monthly fee and the site creation and hosting facilities of **www.zy.com** will be yours (see page 106)*

If you want to go for something even less hands-on, there are a number of sites which allow you to create a Web page through your Web browser, guiding you through the process in a step-by-step way and not requiring any software to be downloaded at all. Two such solutions are www.zy.com and www.verisignwebsites.com. They will generally charge a monthly fee to cover access to the site-editing facilities and hosting of the site on the Web.

As a hybrid to all the above solutions, and for a fraction of the cost of all of them, you might want to have a look at the Web Page Builder Toolkit available for $20 (£13) from toolkit.netfirms.com. There is a demo version of the software available at that site, and it basically guides you through making Web page elements in a similar way to ZyWeb, but with a little more freedom (and hence complexity) left to the designer. Still, it's definitely a bargain, considering the price.



*Better known for charging people to make their Web sites secure, VeriSign is now in the site-making business too via **www.verisignwebsites.com***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Frames
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+Text navbar with hover effects (sample)
+Drop-down menu
+Multi-level DHTML menu (sample)
+Hover links
Popup window
Feedback/order forms sent to your email
Colored scrollbars
Tables
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Template pages
Blank link buttons
Free web host search engine
* These page editors are as easy to use as a word processor. No knowledge of HTML is required for simpler pages. For more advanced pages user need only know how to copy and paste generated code into clearly defined sections of the

*A quick and cheap way to get a Web site off the ground for very little cash can be found at **toolkit.netfirms.com***

To SVG or not to SVG?

Q I like to stay up to date with the latest Web technologies, but have to admit a little confusion as to the purpose of the SVG standard. I don't really see how it's much better than GIF or JPEG graphics. It's been around for a while but doesn't seem to have been very widely adopted. Is it worth my while starting to incorporate it into new Web designs or might that just cause problems for visitors who can't view SVG content?

Kehinde Green

A **It's always difficult to know when it's safe to start designing sites that rely on new Net technologies, and SVG has had an unusually slow take-up since it became an official standard back in 2001. For the benefit of readers who don't know what on earth this is all about – Scalable Vector**

Dead centre

Q I would like to create a page that contains a text box taking up half of the height and width of the browser window and centred perfectly. If possible I'd like to avoid using images or spacers or the other messy methods I've experimented with so far. I'm guessing there's a devilishly clever way of doing this with style sheets, so why don't you tell me what it is?!

Paula Brochu

A **I'm glad you agree that style sheets have the answer to everything except world hunger (see www.thehungersite.org for one answer to that – and even that uses style sheets!). The steps here outline how to achieve the effect you're after with a simple style sheet. It makes sense to opt for the internal style sheet for this sort of effect, as I presume you don't want to make a whole site based on it.**

```
<html><head>
<title>Centred table</title>
<style type="text/css">
BODY {margin:0; padding:0;
height:100%;}
DIV {top:25%; left:25%;
width:50%; height:50%; position:absolute;}
TABLE
{width:100%;height:100%;border:1px
dotted blue;}
</style></head>
```

1 Coding the style sheet

The code defines the styles required. First we zero the margin and padding for the page, so they don't affect the centring of the text box. The DIV style specifies its position and size in proportional terms; the TABLE ensures it fills the space created by DIV.

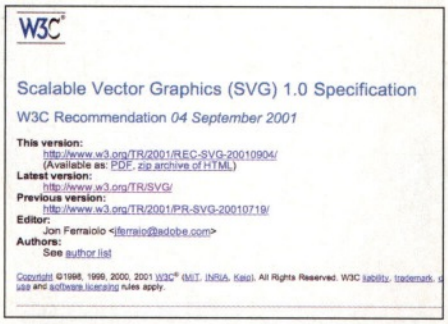
```
<body>
<div><table><tr><td>
This table takes up 50% of the height and
50% of the width of the Web browser
window.
</td></tr></table></div>
</body>
</html>
```

2 Text box code

With the styles in place, coding the text box itself is dead easy, as shown above. In an ideal world we wouldn't need to have a TABLE tag nested within the DIV tag, but this is done to keep certain non-compliant Web browsers happy.

Graphics (SVG) is a new way of making images for the Web. It is based on XML (Extensible Markup Language), which is slowly becoming the means used to describe all content on the Web. The advantage of SVG over previous graphic formats is similar to the advantage of Macromedia Flash over a normal online movie. SVG images can be created by describing their structure as vectors rather than as bitmaps, allowing them to be resized without loss of quality. At the same time, SVGs can contain text and bitmap content. In fact, they've got so much in common with Flash that for the time being your best course of action is probably to use Flash instead of SVG, as it has a much broader user base.

SVG will start to become more widespread in the next couple of years, a move helped in particular by the standard being supported by new versions of leading industry packages such as Adobe Illustrator 10 and GoLive 6 (see www.adobe.com/svg), and Jasc WebDraw (see www.jasc.com/products/webdraw). Anyone wanting to view SVGs in their browser can download the free Adobe SVG Viewer from www.adobe.com/svg/viewer/install/main.html.



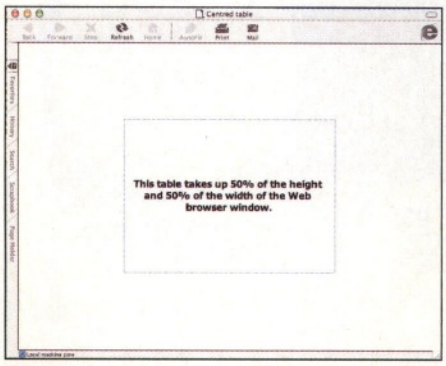
Take-up of the SVG standard for clever-clever Web images has been slow since it became a WWW Consortium Recommendation in 2001 (see www.w3.org/tr/svg/ for the full specification)

Disabling the Flash menu

Q If you right-click on a Macromedia Flash movie playing in a Web browser, it pops up a little menu allowing the user to rewind, fast forward, etc. I don't want people to be able to do this – I want visitors to appreciate the Flash movie as I intended without fiddling around. Is there any way I can stop this menu appearing?

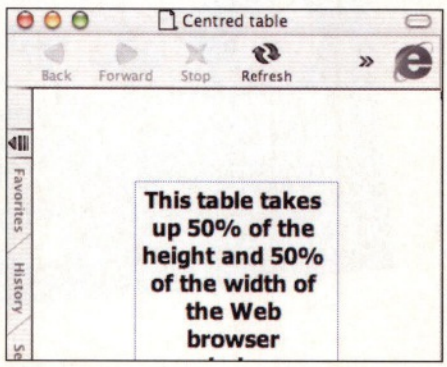
Dawn Ellis

A **You're right that the menu appears as standard when you publish your Flash movie. It can easily be removed if you don't want people controlling how they view your movie masterpiece. With your movie open in the Flash authoring package, go to the File menu and choose 'Publish Settings'. Click on the 'HTML' tab at the top of the window and uncheck the 'Display Menu' option. When you save the movie, this will remove all the viewing controls from the pop-up menu. Bear in mind that while this does reduce the potential for users to corrupt the intended viewing experience, it may also frustrate those visitors who want to pause or restart the Flash movie for whatever reason.**



3 Viewing the results

This screenshot shows the look of the page. We've added extra tags to style the text. You could import a style sheet from elsewhere to define the styles for this by adding **<link href="stylesheet.css" type="text/css" rel="stylesheet">** just after <head>.



4 Resizing the window

To show the versatility of the code, here's a screenshot of the same browser window from step three, which has been manually resized. The text box resizes itself in proportion to the window, but some Web browsers may not display as loyally as this.

Design doctor

Dredworks

URL: www.quick66.freeserve.co.uk
Creator: Dred

THE DOCTOR IS quite puzzled by much of this site, starting with the Web address bearing no resemblance to the site name. He's also beginning to wonder whether anyone is listening to his regular appeals against the twin horrors of gateway pages and frame-based sites, but will continue to rant about these crimes against Web design in any case. Here goes with another triple-strength prescription…

Gateway grind

The first thing a visitor to the site sees is a very pretty but ultimately pointless graphic explaining that it has been designed for people with a particular size monitor and palette size. Not the warmest welcome, and as I've said many times before, no well-designed site should have to issue such warnings. The whole point of Web design is that you design for a broad range of computer users, who should be able to access the key information on your site regardless of their computer's specification.

Futile frames

To keep the orange glow of the Dredworks logo and the navigation bar visible at all times, a frame-based design has been adopted. Not a good decision, as it prolongs the time taken to download the first page of the site. This is a much greater loss than the marginal gain in speed on navigating between pages in the site. Needless to say, it also reduces the accessibility of the site for people who aren't using a frame-capable browser, and will scupper the chances of getting a good search engine ranking at the same time.

Update overdue

Featuring the dates of the latest updates to the site is a good idea when those dates are relatively recent, but when they're from almost a year ago it just puts visitors off. People expect sites to be changed frequently, so if you're not going to be able to update regularly, don't share the fact with everyone quite so obviously.

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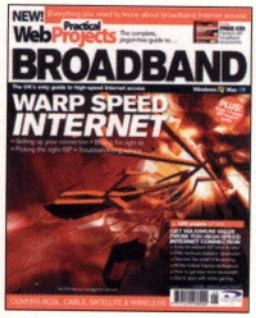

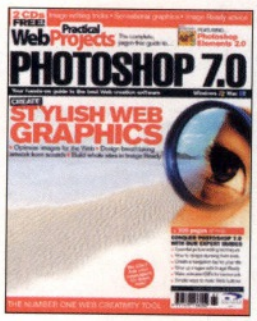

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Browsing

ESSENTIAL ADVICE ON GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION

WELCOME...

WE ALL LIKE a good laugh from time to time don't we? Whether it's chortling at a bloke falling off a ladder in *Some Mothers Do Have Em*, or getting ticklish ribs over a sketch about a dead parrot. There's plenty of chuckles to be had on the Web too, which is why we've decided to round up ten of the best comedy sites online, covering everything from timeless classics like *Only Fools and Horses* to modern mirth-makers such as *South Park*.

It's not all clowning about though, as we've managed to pack in a bevy of helpful insights into getting the best from your connection. This includes a round-up of the great new file-sharing features of Morpheus 3, a look at the latest version of WinZip and a guide to searching the Web more effectively.

James Thornton, Features Editor

What's inside...

76 **Find it now: comedy sites**
Laugh your head off with our guide to the hilarious home pages of the top telly comedy shows around

78 **Searching tips**
Find it faster online by checking out our hot searching tips and tricks

80 **What's new in Morpheus 3?**
Morpheus is back with a bang. Discover the file-sharer's new features with our insightful guide

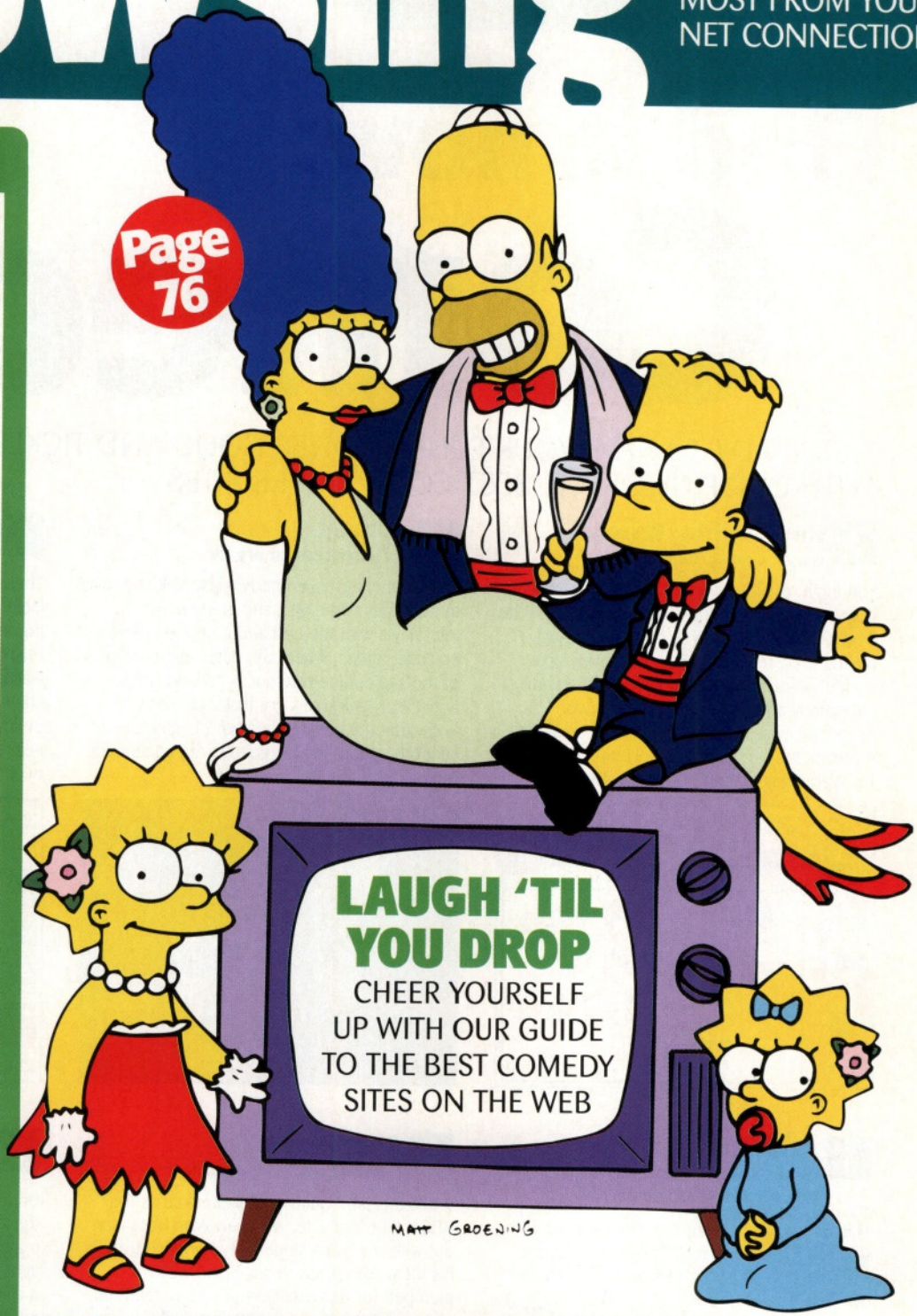
82 **Surf the Web anonymously**
Keep your Net activity a secret from hackers with the help of IDZap

84 **Check out WinZip 9 Beta**
Master the impressive compression functions within the latest version of the award-winning WinZip

86 **Power up IE6 with MyIE2**
Revolutionise the way you surf with this plug-in that boosts the performance of Internet Explorer

88 **Get more from the Google Directory**
There's more to Google than a search engine, as we show with this guide to its comprehensive directory

90 **Web browsing Q&A**
Clive Parker fixes your connection conundrums once and for all



Other treats in your browsing section...

Finding the exact information you're looking for on the Web can be a thankless task. We show you how to cut to the chase with our handy collection of searching tips and tricks

Morpheus is one of the stalwarts of the file-sharing world, and now it's back with a brand new version. We show you how to get to grips with its awesome new features in our comprehensive guide

Find it now: Comedy

GET READY TO HAVE YOUR FUNNY BONES GOOD AND TICKLED WITH OUR PICK OF THE BEST COMEDY WEB SITES

1 Roy Chubby Brown
www.chubbybrown.com

You might think he's a foul-mouthed larrikin but surprisingly, Chubby Brown has one of the best sites in comedy. The podgy stand-up makes good use of Flash as he serves up a sackful of interactive content including games, animations and wallpapers. The site won't score any awards for political correctness, but it proves that the blue comic has the same flair for Web design has he does for swearing.

2 Spaced
www.spaced-out.org.uk

Fans of the surreal comedy will absolutely revel in this official site. Visit and enjoy news, interviews with the cast and comprehensive episode guides, where the eagle-eyed creators of the site outline references to films, music and TV programmes. For instance, did you know that the aerial shot after 21 minutes 16 seconds of the first program is ripped straight out of *Evil Dead 2*?

3 Only Fools and Horses
www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/onlyfools

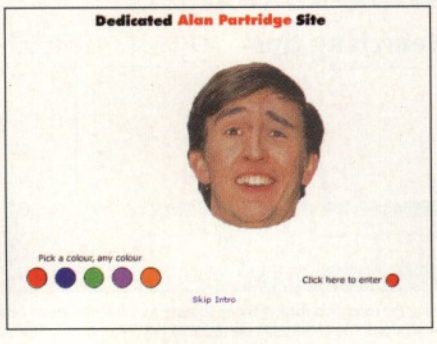
There are plenty of fan sites dedicated to Delboy and Rodders but the official BBC home page is the pick of the lot, with all manner of quizzes, games and downloadable wallpapers along with plenty of trivia about the show. There's also a hilarious 'Hooky Street' online store where you can browse the legit gear sold by Trotters Independent Traders over the years. Cosmic.

4 Avid Merrion
www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/a/avidmerrion

This E4 microsite is sure to make you do a sex wee if you're a fan of the oddball comic Avid Merrion. His Web retreat comes with its own forum, desktop wallpaper and downloadable video clips of him fooling around with the contestants of his favourite TV program, *Big Brother*.

5 Alan Partridge
www.alan-partridge.co.uk

While this isn't quite as well-stocked as the BBC's Partridge site, we know Alan has fallen out with the Beeb since Tony Hares spurned his ideas for a second series, so we've plumped for this excellent fan page. From its cheesy intro page to the streamable Alan Partridge megamixes, the site could have been designed by the Norwich-based DJ himself.



6 Red Dwarf
www.reddwarf.co.uk

Undoubtedly the biggest comedy Web site in the known universe, RedDwarf.co.uk contains a galaxy of witty pages to keep fans amused for light years. Packed with the latest Dwarf news, it also boasts an image gallery, character interviews and episode guides. The site is so well-designed it could even be navigated by the bungling crew of the Red Dwarf.

"A yellow cartoon couch potato is probably the sitcom character that people can relate to most."

7 Monty Python
pythonline.com

With contributions from messieurs Cleese and Idle, this site is a must for anyone itching to relive the days of the Ministry of Silly Walks. Beautifully illustrated with classic Terry Gilliam artwork, the site is split into a number of sections including news, an online store and a lively forum. There's even a 'Spam Club' where you can sign up to receive spam, spam, spam, spam, spam and spam from the site.

8 South Park
www.southparkstudios.com

Cartoon characters have evolved from Walt Disney's innocent mice, dopey dogs and lisping ducks to become fat kids with anal probes who get 'seriously p***ed off' if they don't get their cheesy poofs. This online home to Cartman, Kenny and pals will delight any fan with its wealth of audio and video downloads, range of fun games and information about the show and its characters.

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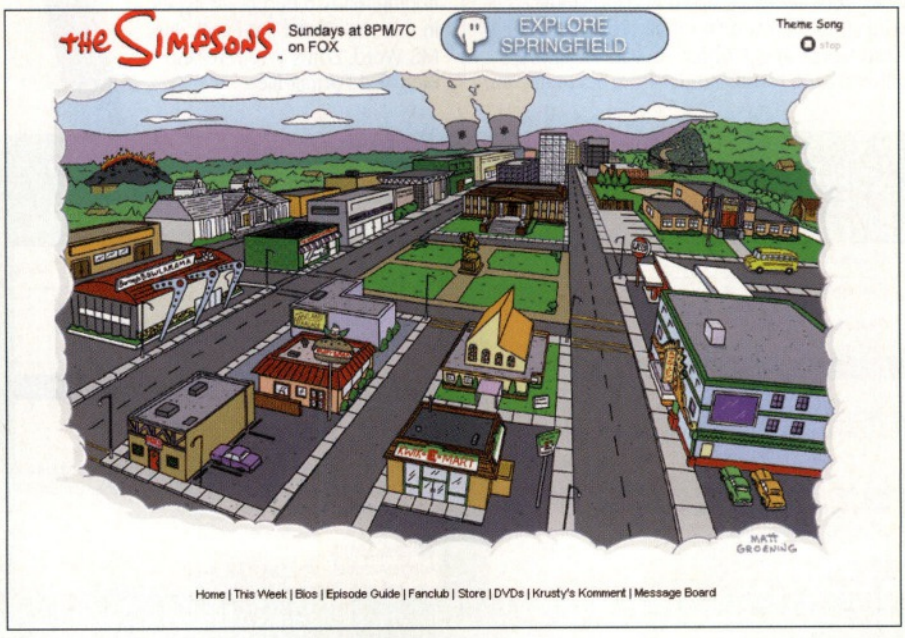
BACKGROUND STORIES...
IT'S ALL BEHIND THE SCENES
SouthParkStudios.com
The Show
The Official SPS.com CHAT ROOM! Click here to CHAT NOW!
A new episode of South Park airs October 22nd
Sections
FAQs Section Updated
Sound Downloads for "I Crime Stoppers" now available

9 The Office
www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/theoffice

This massive *Office* home page has enough to distract any fan from their working day, with clips, interviews and words of wisdom from the Brentmeister. There's even a Wernham Hogg newsletter in which David apologises for suggesting cannabis should be given to anorexics so they get the munchies. Other offerings include an interactive map, pub quiz game and a 'Brent-alikes' section.

10 The Simpsons
www.thesimpsons.com

Out of all the sitcom characters down the years, it's amazing to think that a yellow cartoon couch potato is probably the one that people can relate to most. *The Simpsons* has become a television institution and this colourful site pays homage to Homer, his family and the rest of the krazy kats of Springfield in fine style. From its beautiful swinging doughnut intro sequence, to the *Simpsons* theme tune that blasts out, the site looks and feels like an episode of the show. While there's little in the way of downloadable clips, you do get a comprehensive episode guide, character profiles and biographies of the actors who voice them. Another great feature is the thriving Springfield Community Centre where you can reminisce about your favourite episodes and pick up some interesting facts from fellow fans. There's also a Simpsons Store for picking up essential items like the Krusty the Clown golf club cover or a Kwik-e-Mart t-shirt. Cowabunga dude!


THE SIMPSONS
Sundays at 8PM/7C on FOX
EXPLORE SPRINGFIELD
Theme Song
Home | This Week | Bios | Episode Guide | Fanclub | Store | DVDs | Krusty's Komment | Message Board

Searching tips

CAN'T FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ON THE WEB? FOLLOW THESE POINTERS AND IMPROVE YOUR SEARCHING POWERS

1 Plus and minus

When you're looking for something on the Internet, it's very easy to just type a rough instruction of what you are looking for into your favourite search engine, cross your fingers and hope for the best. But more often than not, this will get you nothing but pages and pages of irrelevant results. To save yourself the bother of wading through reams of sites, it's time to focus your search and be a bit more specific.

To do this, try making the '+' and '–' buttons part of your search, which should filter out all those unnecessary links and help whittle the results down to relevant pages. For example, if you're looking for camp sites in Devon but don't want to include those in Plymouth, try entering '**+devon +camp sites–plymouth**'. This will bring up pages with that contain the words 'devon' and 'camp sites', but filter out all those that mention Plymouth.

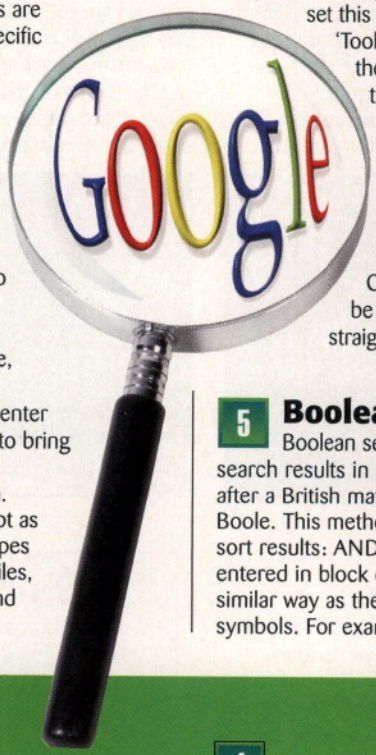
2 Phrase searches

If you're looking up something specific on the Web that contains a number of words or a complete sentence, don't be tempted to just type them all in the search bar and hit 'Return'. If you do this, the search engine will break your sentence down into individual words and then search for all sites that contain those words in any order. As you may have gathered, the results are far from accurate. You can get around this by putting your sentence inside quotation marks, as this makes the search engine treat the words in the sentence as a whole and will only look for sites that contain those words in their set order. It's not often that this search method fails!

3 File type

Some search engines are capable of searching for specific file types, which is great if you're ever after a document that has been saved or formatted in a particular way. Just enter your search string first, and then the type of file that you're after in the form of '**filetype:**'. For example, to find a document about Windows tips that has been saved as an Acrobat PDF file, simply head for a search engine such as Google and enter '**windows tips filetype:pdf**' to bring up a list of all PDF files that contain relevant information.

Google is particularly adept as finding many different file types in this way, including Excel files, MS Word, Lotus WordPro and Rich Text Format files.



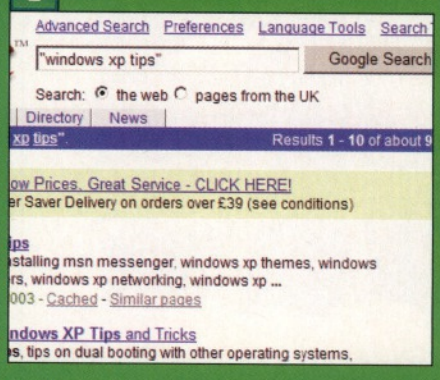
4 Internet Explorer searches

If you're in a hurry, you don't even have to open a search page in your browser in order to perform an Internet search. If configured correctly, Internet Explorer can execute Web searches automatically, just by typing what you're looking for into the address bar. To set this up, open IE and click on 'Tools', 'Internet Options' and then click on the 'Advanced' tab. A list of check boxes will appear, so scroll down until you find the section marked 'Search from the Address bar' and click in the box labelled 'Just display the results in the main window'. Click on 'OK' and you'll now be able to type your searches straight into your browser.

5 Boolean searches

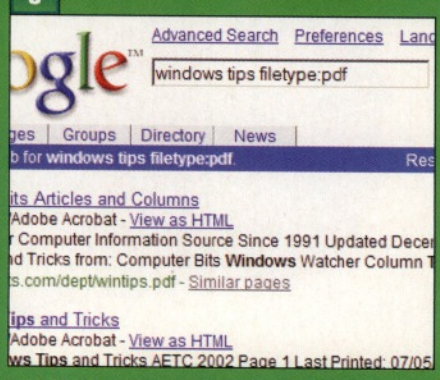
Boolean searches are a way of filtering search results in databases, and are named after a British mathematician called George Boole. This method uses three words to help sort results: AND, OR and NOT. Mostly entered in block capitals, they are used in a similar way as the plus and minus maths symbols. For example, to search for some

2


Advanced Search Preferences Language Tools Search
"windows xp tips"
Google Search
Search: the web pages from the UK
Directory News
Results 1 - 10 of about 9
Prices, Great Service - CLICK HERE!
Saver Delivery on orders over £39 (see conditions)
installing msn messenger, windows xp themes, windows
windows xp networking, windows xp ...
Cached - Similar pages
Tips and Tricks
tips on dual booting with other operating systems,

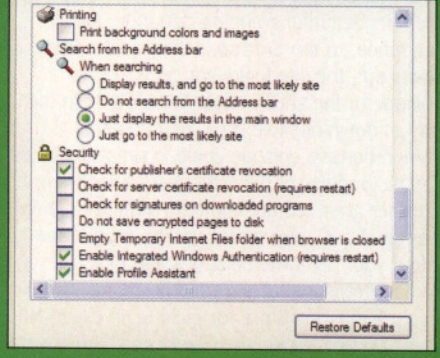
Put phrases inside quotation marks to ensure accurate results

3


Advanced Search Preferences
windows tips filetype:pdf
Groups Directory News
for windows tips filetype:pdf.
Articles and Columns
Adobe Acrobat - View as HTML
Computer Information Source Since 1991 Updated
Tricks from: Computer Bits Windows Watcher
.com/dept/wintips.pdf - Similar pages
Tips and Tricks
Adobe Acrobat - View as HTML
Tips and Tricks AETC 2002 Page 1 Last Printed: 07/05

With a bit of cunning, you can restrict searches to file type

4


Printing
Print background colors and images
Search from the Address bar
When searching
Display results, and go to the most likely site
Do not search from the Address bar
Just display the results in the main window
Just go to the most likely site
Security
Check for publisher's certificate revocation
Check for server certificate revocation (requires restart)
Check for signatures on downloaded programs
Do not save encrypted pages to disk
Empty Temporary Internet Files folder when browser is closed
Enable Integrated Windows Authentication (requires restart)
Enable Profile Assistant
Restore Defaults

Set up the address bar in IE to handle Web searches

cheeses you could enter 'British AND Cheese NOT Wensleydale'.

Although largely replaced now with the plus and minus search strings, this is still supported by larger search engines on the Web, and can occasionally come in useful.

6 Site searches

Anyone who's ever tried to find some information on a site that's a navigational nightmare will find this a useful tip. Instead of wading through the pages yourself, just go to Google and use the search engine to scour the Web site on your behalf and draw a list of results. To do this, simply enter your search string followed by '**site:**' and the URL of the site you want to target. For example, to find the Sports and Social pages on the Wigglesford University Web site, simply enter '**sports and social site:www.wigglesford.ac.uk**' and Google will search all pages in that domain for a matching result.

7 Similar pages

While we're on the subject of Google search tools, we really should mention its nifty additional filter to help find more pages that contain relevant information to your initial search. When you first perform a Google search, find the result that most matches your criteria and you'll see a 'Similar pages' link listed at the end. Simply click on this and the search engine will go off and do an advanced scout for pages that are related to that result, saving you a lot of time and hassle.

8 Get a Girafa

Web searches are all well and good, but wouldn't it be handy if instead of just displaying a list of text-based results you could actually see a thumbnail image of each site found? Well, you can do just that with a quick download of the wonderful Girafa application from **www.girafa.com**. This small program simply plugs into your browser and displays small images of search results in an unobtrusive sidebar. Try it and you'll find it saves you countless hours poring over search results, and the best part is, it's completely free.

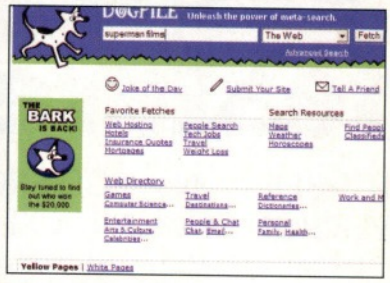
9 Take the cache

As Google scours the Internet for pages to add to its database, it takes a snapshot of every page it comes across and stores it in a cache. This adds an extra dimension to your search, as you can also choose to search the cache with your search term. All you have to do is click on the 'Cached' link which appears after every site that's returned in a search. Up will pop the cached page, so you can quickly see whether the site's worth visiting or not.

10 Visual stimulation

Finding images on the Internet can be a dangerous task – particularly if you're of a sensitive disposition. Even with the most innocent of search terms, there's no way of telling what's going to turn up in your results, or what pages will be displayed when you finally click on what looks like a relevant link. But thankfully, Google's Image Search facility removes all of the hassle of trying to find an image on the Net. Simply type a description of the type of image you're looking for into the 'Image Search' bar, and Google will return pages of relevant images that are displayed as thumbnails in your browser. This is a great way to quickly find the pics you want, and if you're really keen to make sure no, shall we say, racy images make it into your results, you also have the option to turn on an Adult content filter. To access the Google Image Search, simply go to **www.google.com** and click on the 'Images' tab.

Searching alternatives



Dogpile

www.dogpile.com

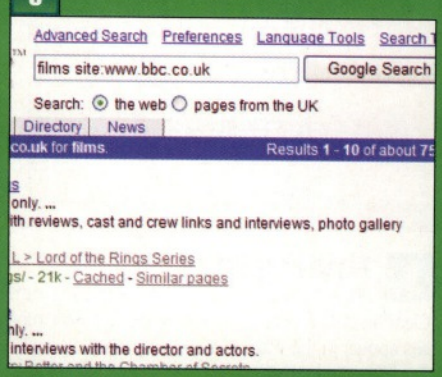
This is one of the most interesting search sites on the Web, offering advanced services such as specific searches for images, products and MP3s with an easy-to-use interface. Simply enter your criteria in the search bar, pick the data type from the drop-down list and click 'Fetch'.

Yahooligans!

www.yahooligans.com

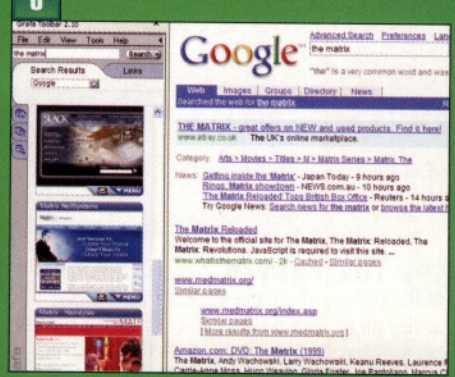
We all know that searching the Net is a risky business, so we welcome Yahooligans! with open arms. This site is geared specifically towards children, and contains a powerful search engine with protected content as well as its own vibrant Online community for kids.

6



Use Google to search the pages of a specific site

8



See what a site looks like before you visit it thanks to Girafa

10

Searching for images is a piece of cake with Google's Image Search

In brief:
Task: Explore the latest version of Morpheus
Software I need: Morpheus 3
Difficulty: Easy
Time I need: Enough to do the downloading

Practical internet IT'S ON THE CD

Get to know the new features in Morpheus 3

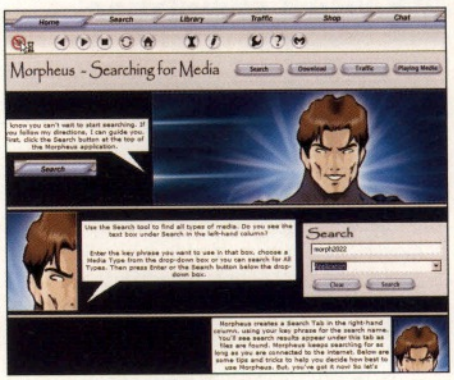
IT'S BEEN ON A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, BUT THE LATEST VERSION COULD ROCKET MORPHEUS BACK TO THE TOP OF THE FILE-SHARING TREE

FILE SHARING COULD possibly be the most controversial topic in Internet circles today. Since Napster, the music industry has been up in arms over piracy and the free distribution of artistic work. However, peer-to-peer file sharing, or P2P for short, has provided a loophole that makes this kind of activity more possible, and more popular. Legally it would seem that providing the facility for people to freely swap data is not a crime, although do be warned that the buck does not stop here. Recently a case was heard regarding this very issue, and it was suggested that major download offenders would themselves be pursued. Again, we would reiterate that none of us at *PI* condone copyright infringement – honest, guvnor.

In the meantime, for strictly legit purposes, we hope to help you through using the latest Morpheus P2P client. Running on the Gnutella network, Morpheus allows the easy search, retrieval and playing of media files. Whether it's software, music, video or images, you can easily find what you're after with this simple client – provided someone else has what you want!

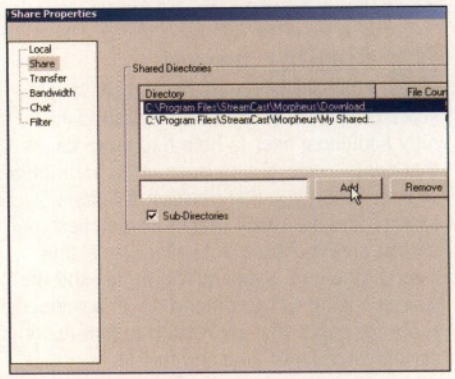
1 Getting started

Click 'Home' on the main toolbar to go into Browser view. This lets you access the Morpheus site and has links to the Support section. Navigation buttons appear under the main toolbar allowing forward and back operations, plus a Home icon.



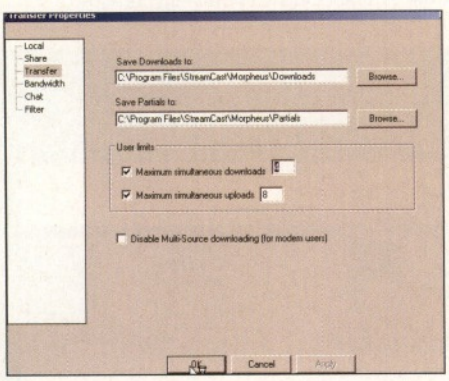
2 Connected?

Before you begin searching and downloading with Morpheus, check that you are connected. In the bottom panel of the client, a green 'Connected' light should be showing. If not, simply click the first round plug icon on the main toolbar.



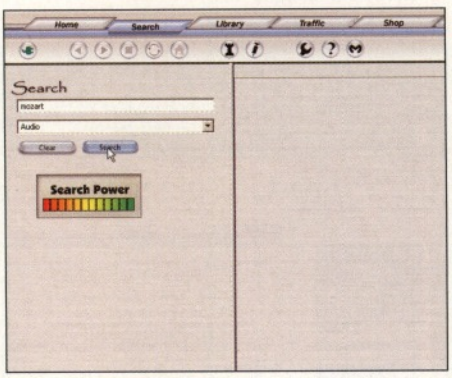
3 Settings

Open the Settings dialog via the spanner button. Here you can configure settings but it's unlikely you'll need to change them. Select 'Share' in the left panel to get a directory list of shared folders. Hit 'Add' to specify more folders with files you wish to share.



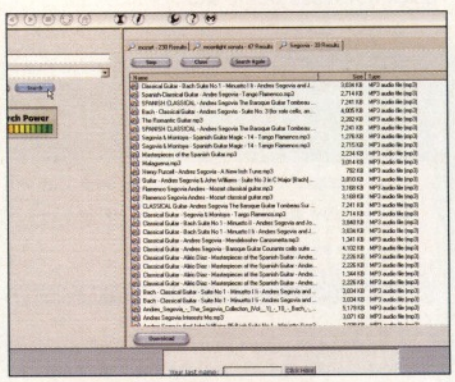
4 Download overload

Click 'Transfer' in the Settings dialog to specify where to save your downloads. The User Limits box gives you options for restricting download and upload operations. If your connection is lagging, lowering both these parameters can speed things up.



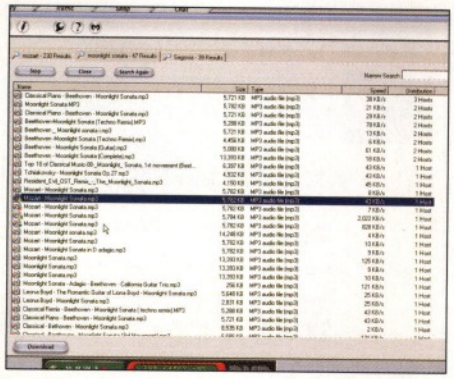
5 The search

The Search button accesses a multi-pane window for locating downloads. On the left is a panel with two boxes for submitting search criteria. Enter a keyword into the first, relating to an artist name or title, and select the file type from the drop-down box.



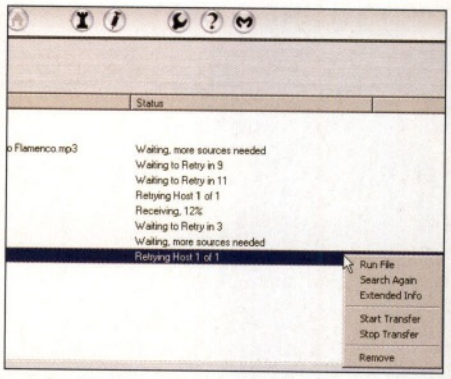
6 Finding files

Press 'Search' to get Morpheus looking, or hit 'Clear' to delete your keyword and restart. Matching files appear in the main window, in a tabbed panel. This lets you do multiple searches simultaneously and flick through the progress of each.



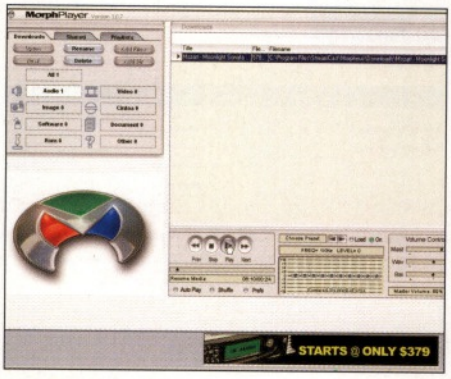
7 Get what you want

If you find what you're after, double-click the file to initiate the transfer. Although the right files often appear, it doesn't mean they're immediately available; often they are not, so make multiple selections of the same file until you see the green arrow icon.



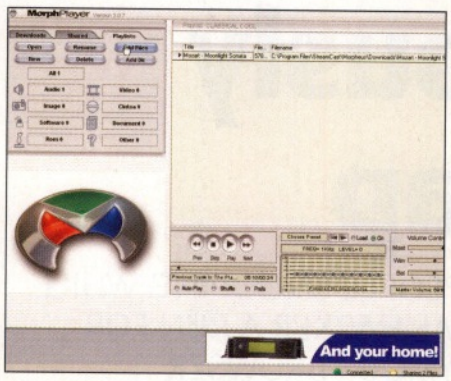
8 Traffic

Files are queued, whether downloading or awaiting a source. View this 'Traffic' via the Toolbar button – two panels list incoming and outgoing files. Progress data is shown, and you can filter items out with the Display buttons. Right-click to remove files.



9 Library

Morpheus has an integrated player. Click 'Library' on the main toolbar to open a window listing all your downloads, and a media control panel below. Find your files with the tabbed box in the top left if not shown, and double-click a file to play.

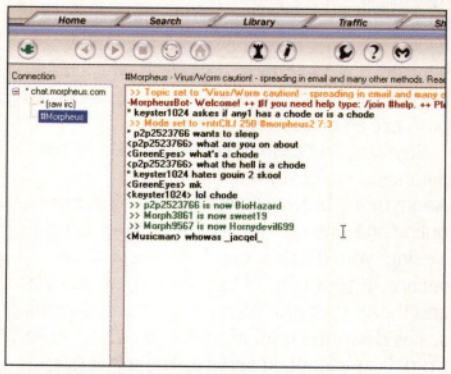


10 Stack tracks

Click the 'Playlists' tab in the folder panel to open, create or delete track playlists. Click the 'New' button and enter a name for the list in the pop-up box. An empty playlist will be created, so add a file with 'Add Files' and locate with the 'Browse' dialog.

11 Gimme software

The main toolbar has two round buttons that are links to sites offering free software. The first has a chess icon that offers downloadable games, while the second's syringe refers to diagnostic programs like virus checkers. Click either and follow instructions.



12 Idle chit-chat

If you've time to spare, click the 'Chat' button on the main toolbar. This opens an integrated chat forum that lets sharers the world over talk on the Morpheus network. Set a nickname in the Settings dialog under 'Chat' and you're ready to communicate.

Web resources

Morpheus online

www.morpheus.com

A simple and bold site, this is the official developers' site for Morpheus. It keeps things nice and simple just like the client, and basically allows you to download the software quickly. The FAQ section gives quick answers to common gripes, while Links points you to relevant sites. As you'd expect, there's also a disclaimer on copyright issues to cover any nervous backs.

Music City

www.musiccity.com

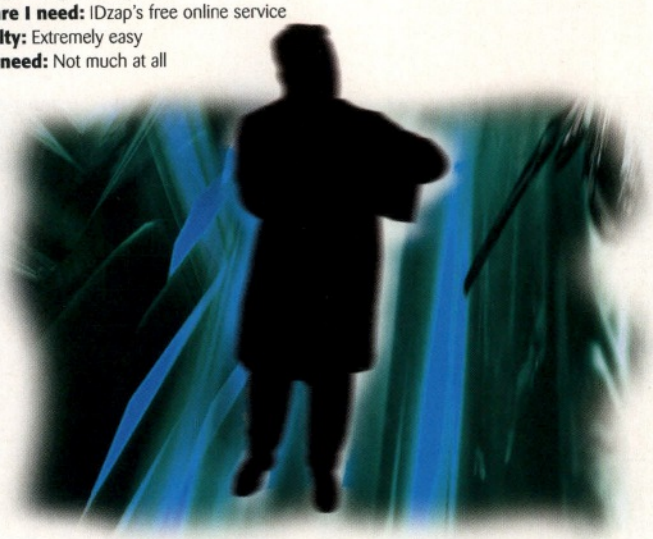
This site has been set up by StreamCast Networks, the clever bods behind Morpheus. Its purpose is to provide a forum where fledgling or established musical acts can air their tunes. Visitors can spot a band or artist who wishes to distribute their latest tracks and download them via the Morpheus network.

Jargon buster

Traffic

No it's not of the cars, buses and bikes variety, although the analogy works well in this case. This term refers to data flowing in many directions across a network, where the connections are the roads and the information is the vehicles – if you like. Using a file-sharing client like Morpheus is all about retrieving files from other people while they transfer files from you. This is known as downloading and uploading, but you can imagine that as more of these transactions are initiated things get congested. So if your connection isn't super fat or fast, try cutting down your traffic, and your wait, by not doing everything at once.

In brief:
Task: Surf incognito with IDzap
Software I need: IDzap's free online service
Difficulty: Extremely easy
Time I need: Not much at all



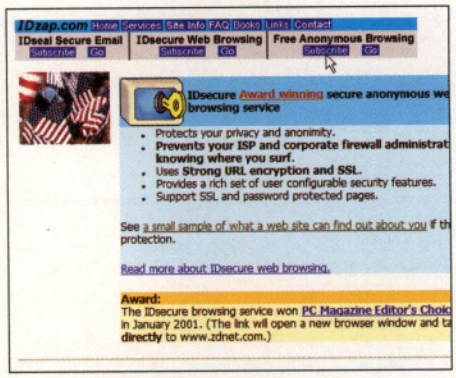
Surf the Web anonymously with IDzap

IF YOU'RE PARANOID ABOUT PEOPLE SNOOPING WHILE YOU SURF, GIVE ANY POTENTIAL HACKER A RUN FOR HIS MONEY WITH THIS ANONYMOUS BROWSER

EVER FEEL LIKE you're being watched? In an age where entertainment has adopted a voyeuristic tendency, you may have good cause for concern. Widely prophesised in fiction, George Orwell's classic *1984* described a dystopian society where 'Big Brother' was watching (how ironic that it's people who are now watching *Big Brother*). These days it seems we can't get enough of cameras, be they CCTV or even mobile, which makes it exceedingly difficult to avoid being under someone's watchful eye. However, if you thought escaping to the electronic confines of Internet could provide a safe haven, you're in for a shock.

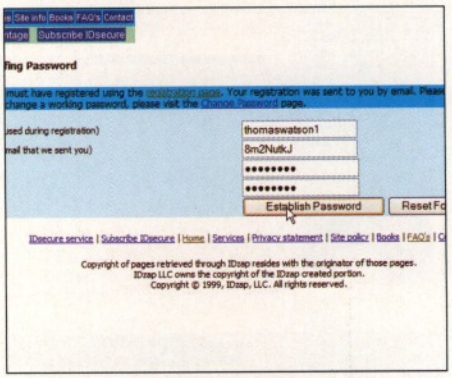
Others may not be able to actually see you surfing the Web – yet – but it turns out there are other ways of finding out what you're up to. Whenever you connect to the Net, a certain amount of information about you is available. You could think of it as leaving fingerprints on visited pages, and most of the time this information is used for corporate marketing. Dotcom companies will often establish what browser you're using, not just for filtering content, but to understand software preferences. It is also possible to glean which ISP you're using, along with more discreet information such as IP and email addresses. Similarly, your service provider or network admin at work can monitor what you've been looking at, which is a good reason for having nothing to hide. Usually this sort of activity is not a problem, and is seldom used for anything malicious, but the potential exists. If your personal details were to fall into the hands of a hacker, the fact they know your IP could leave your PC open to attack. Potentially, this could lead to payment transactions being intercepted or in extreme cases, identity theft.

Spyware and spam have only added to the paranoia, but luckily help is at hand. Anonymous browsing services are available online and prevent the sites you retrieve from 'seeing' you. IDzap is one such network of secure servers that act as a proxy between you and the Web. It also offers free registration that scales down the level of protection you receive from its subscription service. The full version goes on to conceal the bridge between you and your ISP, while encrypting your history from beady eyes. It's incredibly powerful and very easy to set up, so over the next nine steps we'll guide you through the process. In no time at all you'll be giving Big Brother the slip.


IDzap.com Home Services Site Info FAQ Books Links Contact
IDseal Secure Email
IDsecure Web Browsing
Free Anonymous Browsing
Subscribe Go
IDsecure Award winning secure anonymous we
browsing service
Protects your privacy and anonimity.
Prevents your ISP and corporate firewall administrat
knowing where you surf.
Uses Strong URL encryption and SSL.
Provides a rich set of user configurable security features.
Support SSL and password protected pages.
See a small sample of what a web site can find out about you if th
protection.
Read more about IDsecure web browsing.
Award:
The IDsecure browsing service won PC Magazine Editor's Choic
in January 2001. (The link will open a new browser window and ta
directly to www.zdnet.com.)

1 IDzap home

IDzap's home page is split into sections accessed by the tabbed panel in the top left side, and you are given a brief explanation of what's on offer. In the 'Free Anonymous Browsing' panel, click 'Subscribe' to sign up.

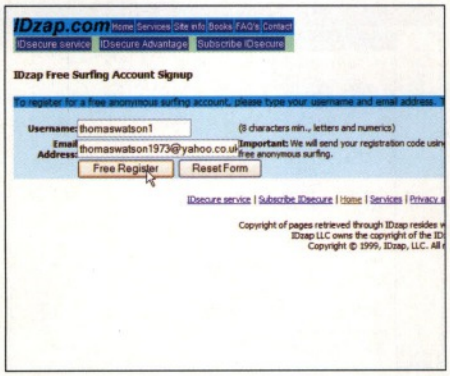

Subscribe IDsecure
ing Password
thomaswatson1
8m2NufkJ
Establish Password
Reset Fo
IDsecure service | Subscribe IDsecure | Home | Services | Privacy statement | Site policy | Books | FAQ's
Copyright of pages retrieved through IDzap resides with the originator of those pages.
IDzap LLC owns the copyright of the IDzap created portion.
Copyright © 1999, IDzap, LLC. All rights reserved.

4 Password confirm

Establish your new password by filling in the four text boxes. You need to enter your confirmed username, mailed registration code, and declare a new password. When all the boxes are filled, click 'Establish Password' to get started.

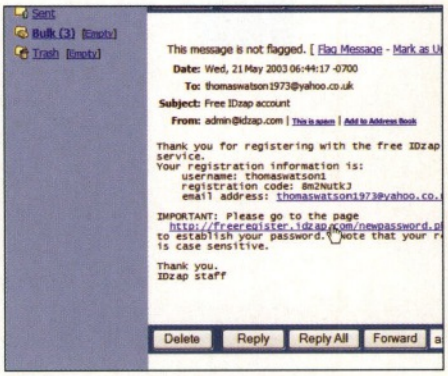
7 Browsing away

Any pages you visit are retrieved by IDzap, processed, and secretly routed to you. This means sites you visit won't be able to glean information about you while you browse their sites. The pages themselves are unaffected by this process.



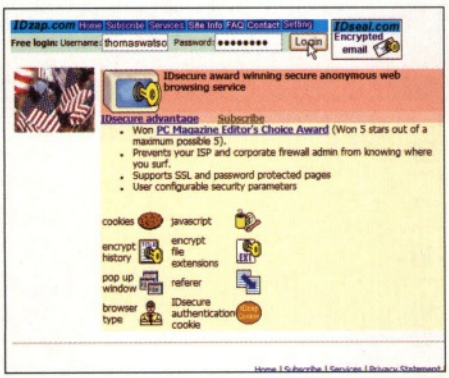
2 Sign up

The account signup screen is again very simple – all you need to provide is a username along with a valid email address. Upon clicking the 'Free Register' button, you will be sent a confirmation email containing your account information.



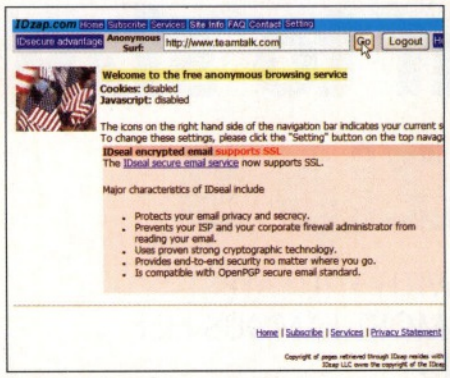
3 Confirmation mail

After registering, you should receive a confirmation email. Open it and note down the code that follows your username. You now have to click the link directing you to a verification site otherwise you won't be able to use the service.



5 Secure login

You'll be notified if your registration is successful, and a link will appear directing you to the secure server. Follow this to reach the above page, enter your username and password in the top panel and click 'Login'.


IDzap.com
IDsecure advantage
Anonymous Surf:
http://www.teamtalk.com
Go
Logout
Welcome to the free anonymous browsing service
Cookies: disabled
Javascript: disabled
IDseal encrypted email supports SSL
The IDseal secure email service now supports SSL.
Major characteristics of IDseal include
Protects your email privacy and secrecy.
Prevents your ISP and your corporate firewall administrator from reading your email.
Uses proven strong cryptographic technology.
Provides end-to-end security no matter where you go.
Is compatible with OpenPGP secure email standard.
Home | Subscribe | Services | Privacy Statement

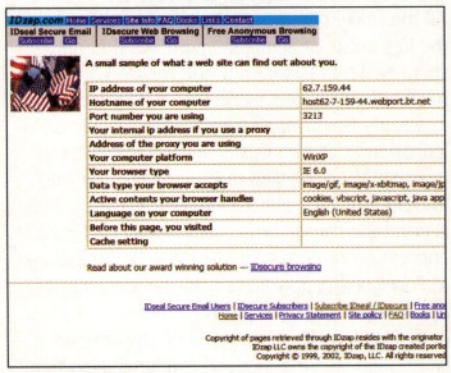
6 Search the Web

This page is important because it's where you browse the Net from. Instead of using the browser's address box for entering URLs, you must type them into this page. Use the box labelled 'Anonymous Surf' and click 'Go' to get going.

Add Favorite
Internet Explorer will add this page to your Favorites list.
Make available offline
OK
Cancel
Customize...
Name: [IDzap] TEAMtalk Football - Football News Service -
Create in >>
New three-year deal for Leicester boss Adams
Micky Adams has committed his future to Premiership new-boys Leicester by pen
improved and extended three-year deal. More...

8 Adding Favourites

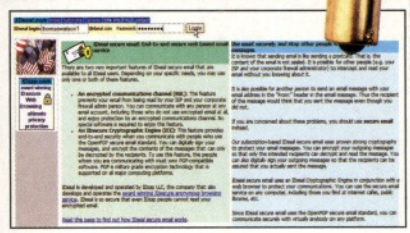
You can add pages to your Favorites as normal using IDzap, but any URL reference will remain addressed through the company's server. A Favorite will then be automatically retrieved through IDzap.


IDzap.com
IDseal Secure Email
IDsecure Web Browsing
Free Anonymous Browsing
A small sample of what a web site can find out about you.
IP address of your computer 62.7.159.44
Hostname of your computer host62-7-159-44.webport.bt.net
Port number you are using 3213
Your internal ip address if you use a proxy
Address of the proxy you are using
Your computer platform WinXP
Your browser type IE 6.0
Data type your browser accepts image/gif, image/x-xbitmap, image/jp
Active contents your browser handles cookies, vbscript, javascript, java app
Language on your computer English (United States)
Before this page, you visited
Cache setting
Read about our award winning solution — IDsecure browsing

9 Your data

If you don't think you need a service like IDzap, take a look at the site's FAQ. This shows a table illustrating all the information your computer broadcasts while online. IDzap masks sensitive details like IP and port details to heighten security.

Power users' tip



REMAINING ANONYMOUS DOESN'T stop at browsing – IDzap provides a really useful email service, too. Once you've signed up for the free service, you will be allowed access to a sister site called IDSeal.com, where you can log in as normal. Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology is used to encrypt messages you may send to any account. Protection is provided by a special communications channel, with no extra software or downloads required. Rather cheekily, this enables you to send emails that your Internet service provider (ISP) or corporate network administrators can't read. Additionally, the service offers support for the IDSecure Cryptographic Engine (ICE), which enables users with special software to send messages that only specified recipients can decipher.

Jargon buster

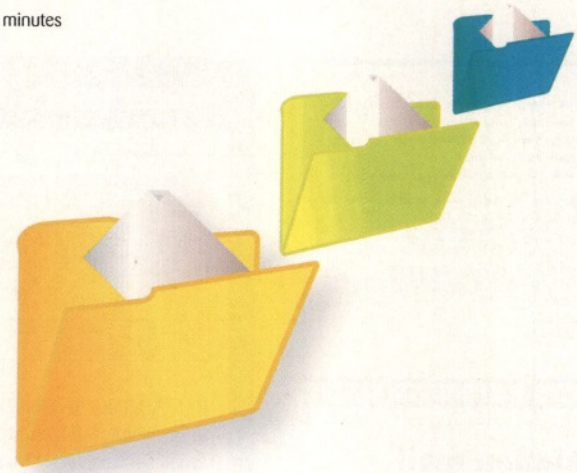
Proxy

Usually referenced when talking about 'Proxy servers', it typically terms an intermediary entity between a workstation user and the Net – usually employed by company networks to increase security and staff access control. The proxy remains unseen by the user as it filters data transactions, with Web pages displayed as normal within the browser.

IP

Standing for 'Internet Protocol', this was developed to allow co-operating computers to share data across a network. IP has now become the standard method used to define how information is passed on the Internet. The IP address is essentially a stream of numbers separated by decimal points, with each segment providing a path. The combination uniquely defines your presence and destination within a network, so you have to have one. Packets of information you've requested require these details to make sure they are delivered.

In brief:
Task: Exploring WinZip 9
Software I need: WinZip 9 Beta
Difficulty: Easy
Time I need: Five minutes



Chop mammoth files down to size with WinZip 9

GET YOURSELF ACQUAINTED WITH THE LATEST OFFERING FROM ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS FILE COMPRESSION SUITES AROUND

AS APPLICATIONS GO, few have managed to become so embedded in people's consciousness than WinZip – just ask anyone who's ever wanted to squeeze a monstrous file onto a tiny floppy disk or bundle up a hungry backup. WinZip's standing among the PC community has been built up over the years and stems from the fact that it provides a useful and simple to use program, and the free distribution of the program helps things as well. The makers of WinZip are certainly doing something right because it's managed to reach version 9, and you can get a taste of what it has to offer by downloading the Beta version from **www.winzip.com**.

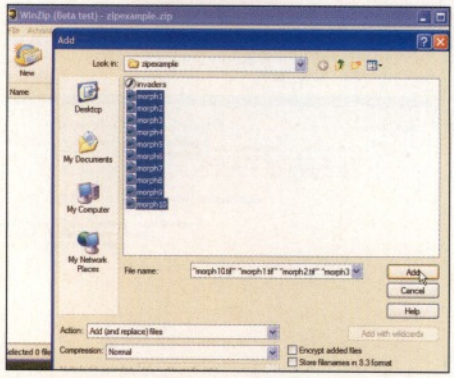
Tried and tested

If you're expecting a radical overhaul in version 9, you may be slightly disappointed. The foundations of the program remain largely unchanged, but that's understandable with such a winning formula. The general appearance of both the 'Wizard' and main 'Classic' interfaces won't win any design prizes either, but they have been touched up with an XP style. What's really important is the functionality, and the foundations for the prominent features are as strong as ever. Needless to say, zipping and extracting files is incredibly easy, with a barrage of new shortcuts for packing and sending email attachments. There are tools for compiling lists of your most popular archives and the option of reading zipped-up documents.

Compress and secure

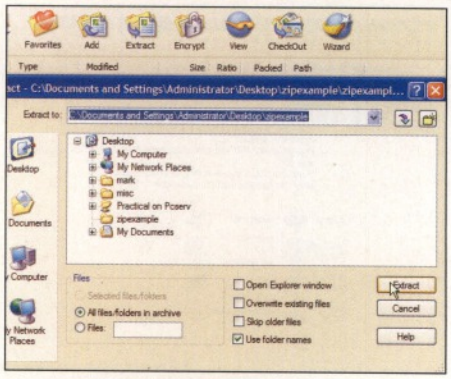
All the really big improvements are centred on the key areas of actual file compression and security. The maximum mode for file squashing has been increased by one level, which should make any Spinal Tap fans chuckle. Known as 'enhanced deflate', this is sure to make the most stubborn of files more manageable with WinZip, boasting almost limitless zip sizes. This is combined with some major revisions to the encryption options. Archives can be locked up to Fort Knox proportions with the inclusion of algorithms used by top government organisations. This is topped off by some nice little touches like enhanced tool tip support and a more attractive HTML-based help assistant.

Over the next nine steps we'll breeze through the new program and outline the parts that you'll use the most. It's the ideal opportunity to get introduced to what surely will become an essential piece of software.



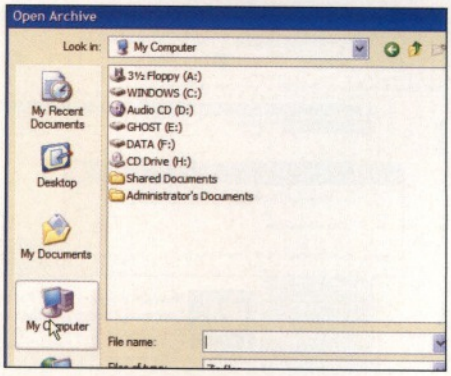
1 Zip it good

It's still easy to get zipping, but there are more options to play with. Give the new archive a name and select where to save it, before adding files with the dialog. Higher levels of compression are available along with encryption facilities.



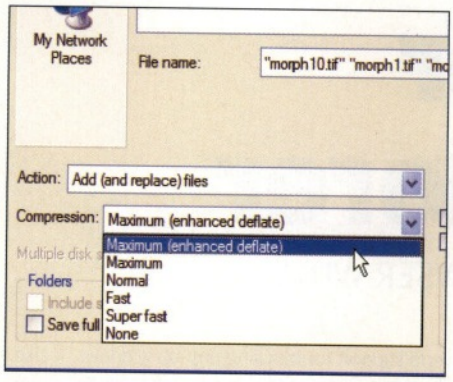
4 In extraction

Unpacking your archives is as simple as ever. Quick links on the right-click menu will do the job from your file manager, while zip files can be opened within the program. Simply click 'Extract' after opening the desired file.



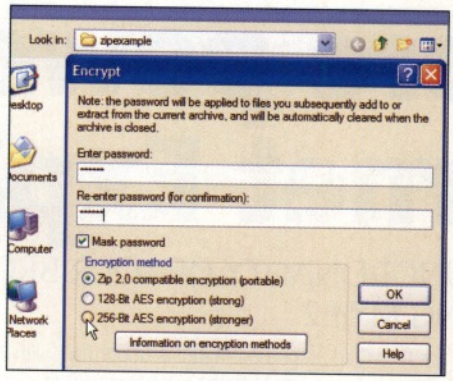
7 Iconic look

A nice addition is the use of 'places bars' that fit in with the Windows schemes that support them. On the main dialogs such as Add, Open or Extract, you'll find quick link icons that take you to main system directories such as the desktop.



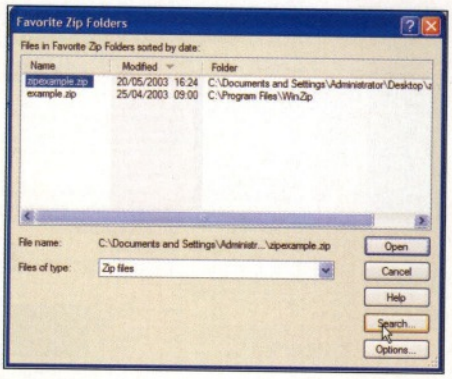
2 Compressive

The new 'Enhanced deflate' mode shrinks zip files even further. This is great for tight spaces or speeding up data transmission and is selected from the 'Compression' menu on the 'Add' file dialog. Only WinZip versions 8.1 or later can extract these.


Look in:
zipexample
Encrypt
Note: the password will be applied to files you subsequently add to or extract from the current archive, and will be automatically cleared when the archive is closed.
Enter password:
Re-enter password (for confirmation):
Mask password
Encryption method
Zip 2.0 compatible encryption (portable)
128-Bit AES encryption (strong)
256-Bit AES encryption (stronger)
Information on encryption methods
OK
Cancel
Help

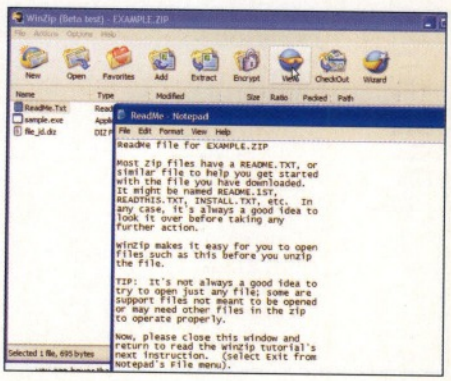
3 Encryption levels

Both 128 and 256-bit key AES encryption facilities are included. This is more secure than WinZip's 2.0 method which is still included for compatibility. Select 'Encrypt added files' and a dialog for password entry will appear, along with level options.



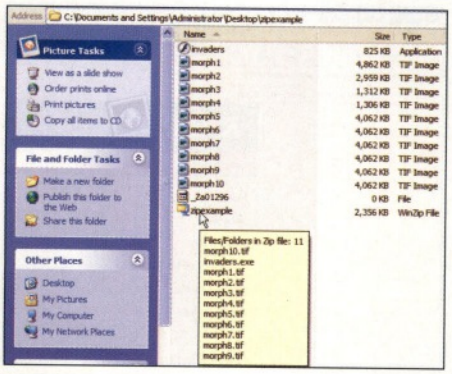
5 Hip zips

We all have favourite sites, so why not favourite zips? If you have important archives all over the place, keep an easy access log. WinZip will scan for suitable files or let you search – all from the 'Favourites' button on the toolbar.


WinZip (Beta test) - EXAMPLE.ZIP
ReadMe - Notepad
ReadMe file for EXAMPLE.ZIP
Most Zip files have a README.TXT, or similar file to help you get started with the file you have downloaded. It might be named README.1ST, READTHIS.TXT, INSTALL.TXT, etc. In any case, it's always a good idea to look it over before taking any further action.
WinZip makes it easy for you to open files such as this before you unzip the file.
TIP: It's not always a good idea to try to open just any file; some are support files not meant to be opened or may need other files in the zip to operate properly.
Now, please close this window and return to read the WinZip tutorial's next instruction. (Select Exit from Notepad's File menu).

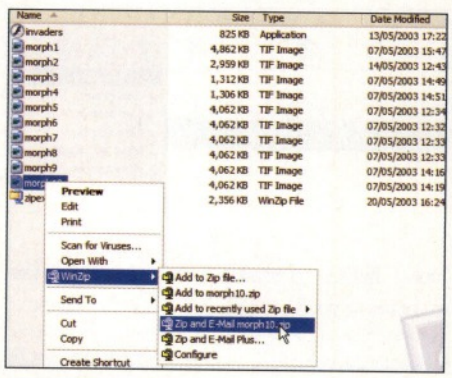
6 File Viewer

The File Viewer utility is an extremely helpful way of previewing file content before extraction, so text files and documents can be opened in an external viewer while being zipped. Select a file within an archive and click 'View' to take a look.



8 Tool tips

One new feature is the ability to check on archive contents without actually firing up WinZip. Simply hover the cursor over a zip file within 'My Computer' or 'Explorer' and a handy tool tip will appear. Up to 25 filenames will be shown.



9 Quick affix

Zipping an email attachment has never been simpler. Locate the file and right-click it. A menu with a special 'WinZip' option will appear – select this and the 'Zip and Email' command containing the filename.

Jargon buster

Archive

This is simply another term used to describe a zip file. Archives are files containing various items that have been compressed and packaged together. As a result, zipped file sizes are usually dramatically smaller than the component items would be normally. WinZip offers an easy of creating archives, viewing their contents and also extracting them to a specified destination.

Compression

Digital information can be shrunk or downsized using mathematical techniques. Files in their base form are no more than reams of numbers, so by applying formulas and equations, these can be reduced. The good news is that WinZip does all of this for you. It has its own compression logic for zipping files, which it also uses to reverse the process and extract files to their original state. This does mean that if WinZip is used to compress the file then it must be used to inflate it again. However, its widespread popularity and availability should mean this isn't a problem.

Extraction

Extraction refers to 'unpacking' an archive file. Remember that most files cannot be opened or used when in a zipped state. The compression procedure must be reversed to 'inflate' all files within an archive, and restore them to their natural state. This obviously means that their sizes will increase, so you need to be aware of the size of the folder they are extracted into. WinZip lets you specify a destination, so you don't have to worry about a zipped file extracting its bloated contents within a weedy floppy.

Encrypt

Keeping data private is a difficult thing in this day and age. Encryption is the traditional method used for encoding sensitive information such as bank or credit card details. As with compression, this involves the application of code sequences or 'algorithms' to disguise raw data. WinZip uses a highly effective method based on a user-defined password. It is this that forms a 'key' that is used to lock the file information up and open it again later. The password must be supplied correctly at both stages, so don't go making your files too safe by forgetting your 'key'.

In brief:
Task: Browse the Web with MyIE2
Software I need: MyIE2
Difficulty: Not rocket science
Time I need: As long as you want

Inject more power into Internet Explorer

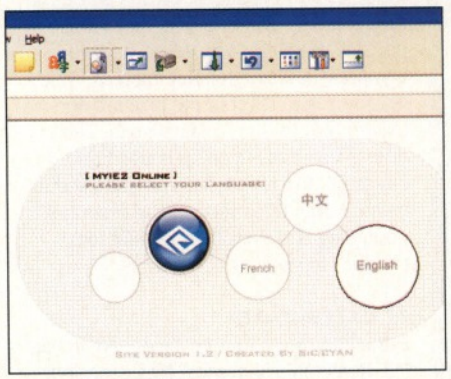
CRANK UP THE SPEED AND FUNCTIONALITY OF YOUR BROWSER WITH THE ALL-SINGING ALL-DANCING MYIE2

INTERNET EXPLORER MAY rule the roost in the browser market but that doesn't mean it's flawless. In fact, there are many aspects that get people's goat, and a number of features are absent from Microsoft's browser. For example, treats such as tabbed browsing and a skinnable interface, as found in Netscape and Mozilla, or Opera's mouse gestures, don't appear in IE – until now, that is.

If IE is Clark Kent then MyIE2 is Superman, with extra special powers to help your browser soar through the Web. Based on the IE core, the program lets you open multiple Web pages with its tabbed interface a la Opera and Netscape.

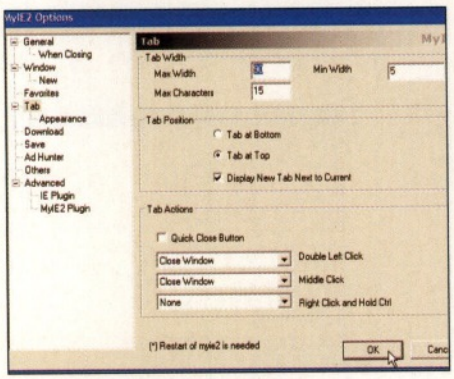
While retaining the basic IE interface, MyIE2 comes with a bevy of top new features such as auto-scrolling, auto form-filling, an auto-hide panel and support for blocking pop-up windows. It also borrows Opera's 'Mouse gestures' feature, allowing you to navigate Web pages simply by holding down the right-click button and dragging the mouse in a particular direction.

With support for skins and plug-ins, MyIE2 takes browsing with Internet Explorer to a whole new level – and you'll never want to go back!



1 Tabbed browsing

You can find MyIE2 at Download.com. Once you've installed it, the first thing to test is the tabbed browsing feature. Once IE has launched click on the 'New' icon to launch a tab containing a new Web page rather than in a separate window.



2 Put it on my tab

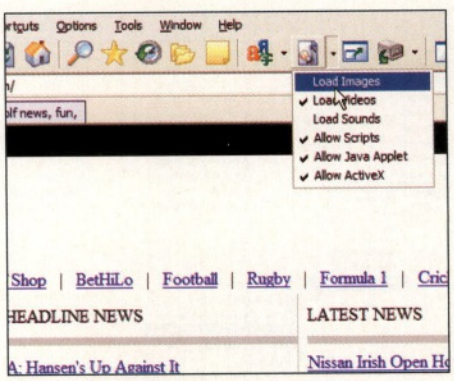
If you're not happy with the way the tab system works, you can change the settings by choosing 'MyIE2 Options' from the Options menu. Click 'Tab' to change the dimensions and position of your tabs or assign shortcuts to tab actions.

3 Auto-scrolling

MyIE2 lets you save precious finger-work thanks to its auto-scrolling feature. This lets you scroll down a Web page automatically without using your mouse. Simply click on the Auto-Scroll icon in the toolbar and select the speed you wish to scroll at.

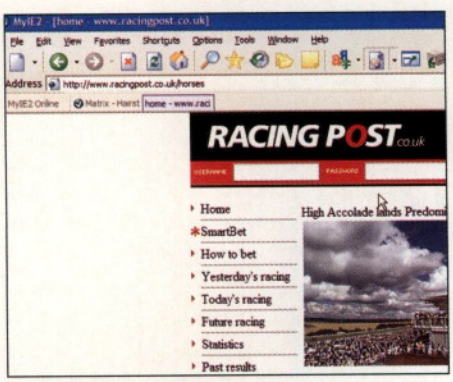
4 Hide and seek

Another neat feature is the Auto-hide function which helps you free up more space on the page you're viewing by obscuring the address bar and tabs from view. To activate this click the 'Auto-Hide' icon, which you'll find at the end of the toolbar.



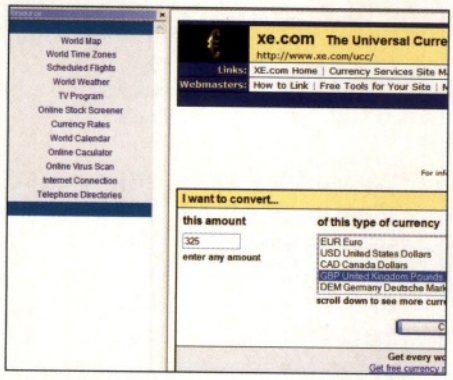
5 Streamlined surfing

Itching to up the pace of your browsing sessions? The Load icon lets you quickly turn off various bandwidth-intensive aspects of the Web such as images, sounds and animations, helping you to fly through Web pages like an Olympic speed skater.



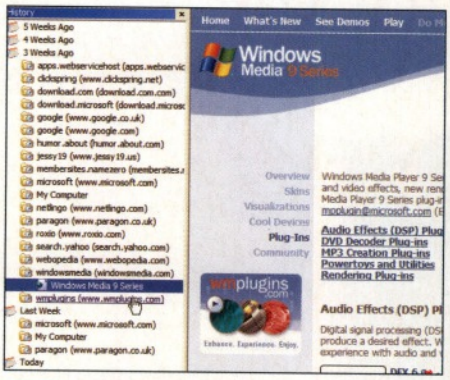
6 Mouse gestures

In a feature borrowed from Opera, MyIE2 lets you navigate pages through the use of 'mouse gestures'. These are activated by holding down the right-click button and moving the mouse in a specific direction, eg left to go back or right to go forward.



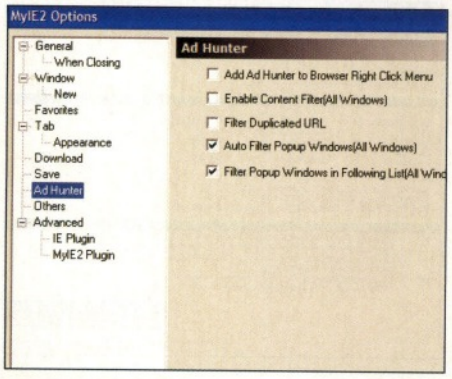
7 Pool your resources

MyIE2 makes good use of the sidebar to bring you extra functionality from IE. The Resource tool is particularly useful as it gives you instant access to a range of handy sites providing weather reports, currency conversion and world maps.



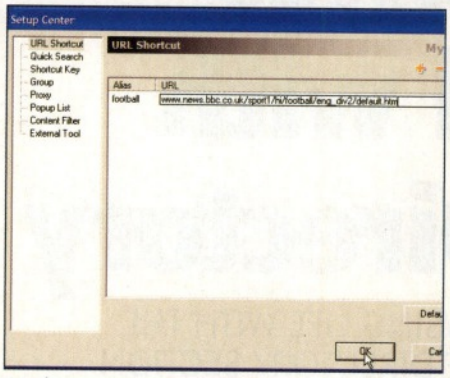
8 Your history

If you can't get to grips with mouse gestures, the History icon represents a simple way of flicking through recently visited sites. A list of the sites you've visited in recent hours, days or weeks is shown in the sidebar and you can access a page by clicking its URL.


MyIE2 Options
Ad Hunter
Add Ad Hunter to Browser Right Click Menu
Enable Content Filter(All Windows)
Filter Duplicated URL
Auto Filter Popup Windows(All Windows)
Filter Popup Windows in Following List(All Wind

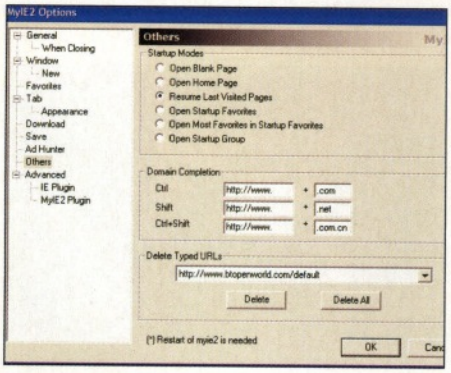
9 Stop the pop

Another godsend in MyIE2's toolbox is its pop-up-blocking capabilities, which ensure you're never plagued by annoying ads. To turn this on or off, click 'Ad Hunter' in the MyIE2 Options menu and check or uncheck the 'Auto Filter Popup...' box.



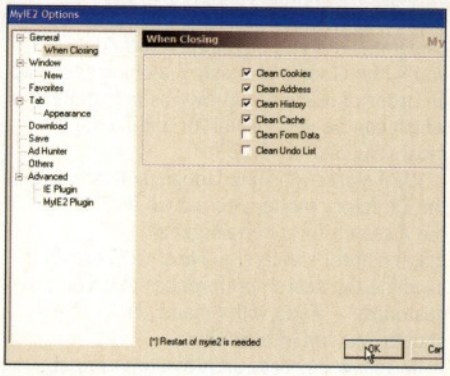
10 URL shortcuts

Tired of long URLs? The URL Shortcut feature can be accessed from the Utility Manager icon on the toolbar. To assign an alias to a URL, click the 'Plus' symbol and enter the shortcut and Web address. You can now access the site just by typing the address.



11 More options

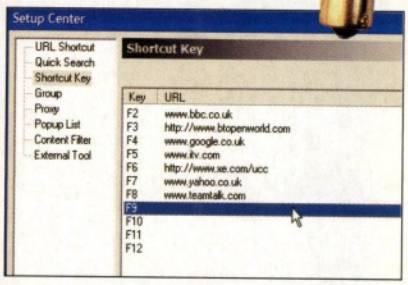
There are a few more options you can tinker with via the MyIE2 Options menu. Click the 'Others' option to apply settings such as changing the Startup mode, auto domain completion and deleting typed URLs. Restart the program for changes to take effect.



12 Clear your tracks

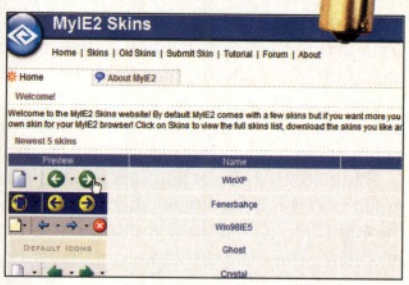
If you're the sort of person who likes to clean up after themselves, click the 'When Closing' option in the General menu. This lets you remove traces of your Web activity such as cookies, history and cache every time you close down IE.

Power users' tip



THE UTILITY MANAGER within MyIE2 will become your best friend over time, as it allows you to access all manner of settings that combine to make your Web life that much easier. As well as the ability to add shortcuts to URLs, this menu allows you to assign shortcut keys for your favourite Web sites, meaning you can call them up in the blink of an eye. The Group feature is also quite useful, as it allows you to store the crop of pages that are opened and come back and load them all simultaneously at a later date. The Popup List setting is also worth getting to know, as it means you can grant access to useful pop-ups from sites that you regularly visit instead of filtering them out.

Power users' tip



ONE OF THE main grumbles people have with IE is its lack of support for skins and plug-ins when compared with other browsers such as Netscape and Mozilla. Thankfully, MyIE2 goes some way towards righting those wrongs. While the program only comes bundled with one default skin, there are plenty more available for download on the Web, giving you the chance to spruce up the IE interface. These can be obtained from the Download section of the MyIE2 Web site (**www.ruhehang.com/myie2/index.htm**). There's also a decent selection of feature-enhancing plug-ins such as ViewSource, LastModified and FlashSave in the program.

In brief:
Task: Sift the Net with the Google Directory
Software I need: Any Web browser you like
Difficulty: Dead simple
Time I need: Literally minutes

Find the sites you need with Google Directory

GET MORE FROM YOUR BROWSING LIFE WITH THE HELP OF GOOGLE'S IMMENSE DIRECTORY SECTION

THE INTERNET IS nothing if not a huge great sprawling mass of information. It's a wonder that people still bother with books, considering the sheer volume of info the Web has to offer. Trouble is, having all this material at your fingertips makes the process of actually finding what could be useful to you rather tricky.

Think about it. Even libraries wouldn't be much cop if no one knew where to look for the right books – so how do they solve the problem? They use directories, catalogues, shelf systems and yes, worryingly efficient librarians. Luckily, some major Net companies have built reputations doing this very job online, including Altavista, Yahoo and Google.

These 'search engines' are basically sites that shuffle off and scour the Web for whatever you tell them you need. They work by searching pages for featured keywords or HTML code for matching data, and without them browsing would be hellish.

To illustrate this point we've decided to show you how one of the most popular engines around can help. It's highly likely that you've used Google before, but have probably never gone beyond its main search service.

This month we invite you to attempt a search using Google's Directory service, a sort of 'Yellow Pages for surfers'. It's an ideal facility for anyone who just fancies pottering about the Web and exploring general topics for items of interest. What's more, it can also be used in conjunction with the regular 'search to channel' results within specified categories. As you dig deeper and deeper, you'll find Google also lists matching sites into an order of relevance known as a 'PageRank', which can be very useful for identifying the most valuable resources.

We'll start by visiting Google and opening the Directory mode, after which we'll carry out a search for a certain guitar manufacturer's Web site. Next, we'll briefly examine the search preferences that you can customise – along with a handy Help page should you run into trouble.

So follow our easy step-by-step tutorial on the right to find out just how useful Google's Directory service can be to you. By the time you're finished, navigating your way around the Internet will be more fruitful than ever – and all within just a few clicks of the mouse.

1 Open Directory

Access Google as you normally would, but instead of using the text search box, do something different. You'll notice that the main page has five tabs, starting with 'Web' as default. Simply click the fourth tab, 'Directory', to begin the search.

Google
Web Directory
Google Search
Directory Help
Search only in Stringed
Search the Web
Stringed
Arts > Music > Instruments > Stringed
Categories
Appalachian Dulcimer (33)
Banjo (91)
Bass (913)
Bowed Strings (421)
Charango (5)
Guitar (1899)
Hammered Dulcimer (78)
Harp (147)
Lute (9)
Mandolin (34)
Mountain Dulcimer (33)
Oud (29)
Shopping (351)
Sitar (10)
Ukulele (92)
Related Categories:
Shopping > Music > Lessons and Instruction > Strings (110)
Shopping > Music > Sheet Music > Strings (25)
Business > Publishing and Printing > Publishers > Music > Stringed (10)
Web Pages
Viewing in Google PageRank order
The Kantele - http://virtual.finland.fi/finfacts/kantele.html
Brief history, photos and sound samples of Finland's national instrument, also known as the "kannel".
House of the Silver Winds - http://members.tripod.com/~Silverwinds/index.htm
Makers of medieval musical instruments.
Indian Stringed Instruments - http://chandrakantha.com/string/
Pictures and descriptions of the stringed instruments of India.
Help build the largest human-edited directory on the Web.
Submit a Site - Open Directory Project - Become an Editor

4 PageRank order

As the search narrows, Google suggests sites that match the developing criteria – listed at the bottom in 'PageRank' order. This specifies how useful Google thinks the site is, shown by a green gauge before the link. For now though, we'll click 'Stringed'.

7 Result!

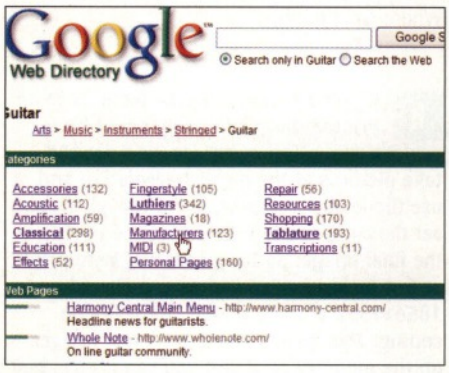
Lo and behold, it's the site we're after. If you liken the search process to climbing a tree, where the main Google index is the root, this point would be a leaf. The search is complete as we found what we wanted, but feel free to carry on looking.

2 The main index

The first directory page is the top-level index that breaks up search topics into general categories. The main search box is included if you want to be specific. Each category title has some common sub-categories, so click 'Music' under 'Arts'.

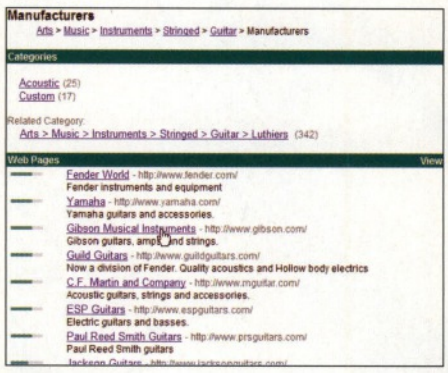
3 Sub-category searching

Everything related to the subject is indexed. All available sections are shown as links, with the number of suitable sites shown in brackets. The Related Categories section below shows other relevant search paths. Click 'Instruments' to move on.



5 Almost there

Click the 'Guitar' category on the next screen. Each page keeps to a similar format, helping you stay familiar with the process. If you lose track, retrace your steps with the 'Category Path' under the Google logo. Click 'Manufacturers' to continue.

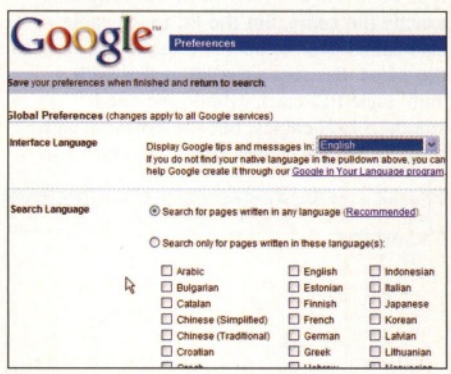

Manufacturers
Arts > Music > Instruments > Stringed > Guitar > Manufacturers
Categories
Acoustic (25)
Custom (17)
Related Category:
Arts > Music > Instruments > Stringed > Guitar > Luthiers (342)
Web Pages
Fender World - http://www.fender.com/
Fender instruments and equipment
Yamaha - http://www.yamaha.com/
Yamaha guitars and accessories.
Gibson Musical Instruments - http://www.gibson.com/
Gibson guitars, amps and strings.
Guild Guitars - http://www.guildguitars.com/
Now a division of Fender. Quality acoustics and Hollow body electrics
C.F. Martin and Company - http://www.mguitar.com/
Acoustic guitars, strings and accessories.
ESP Guitars - http://www.espguitars.com/
Electric guitars and basses.
Paul Reed Smith Guitars - http://www.prsguitars.com/
Paul Reed Smith guitars

6 Site found

This is as far as we need to go, so click the link for the third site in the list. If you're familiar with the subject, you'll notice the famous manufacturers are listed first. This illustrates the ranking rating with pages sorted into order of importance.

8 Edit the preferences

Return to the main page and hit 'Preferences' next to the Google Search button. There are options for setting language constraints and tools for censoring search results. Changes are global to Google services; save by clicking 'Save Preferences'.



9 Somebody help me

Below the Preferences link is another labelled 'Directory Help' – this is where the online help is located. Click it and you'll find a section telling you what the directory is and how it works, plus an FAQ list of common issues.

Jargon buster

Search engine

Typically this refers to the actual tool that is used to perform a search, and is what Yahoo, Google and the rest are known as. They all normally consist of a simple textbox that is used to accept the user's keywords, although an advanced facility is usually provided for adding criteria.

Path

In computing circles this usually relates to a visual cue of where you are within a directory or 'folder' structure. This can range from those sequences of filenames and backslashes in DOS to the more modern icon tree in contemporary file managers. In the context of a hierarchical search, where you drill down into subject areas, it can also be useful to check the point you're at. The Google Directory displays a path in the top left-hand corner, consisting of links to previous stages of your search. This allows you to return really quickly to an earlier, more abstract index so that you can make different choices without starting again from scratch.

Keyword

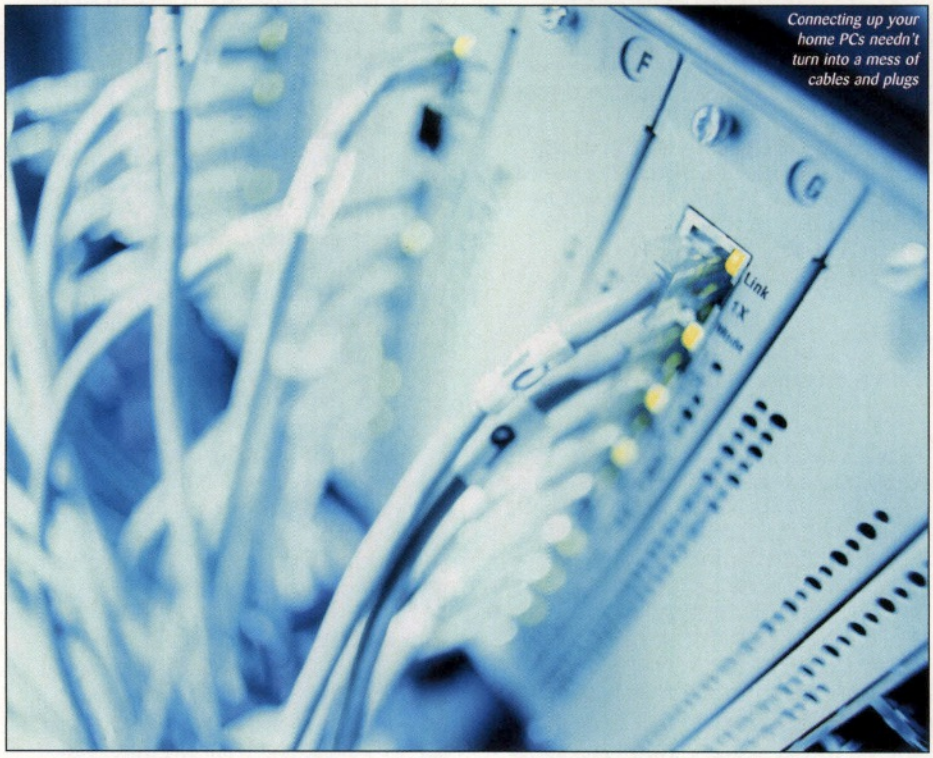
This term simply refers to the text you are expected to enter into the boxes provided by search tools. They advise you to use short, punchy words which are generic to what you're looking for. Otherwise, using lengthy and highly specific phrases may narrow the process down so much that matching results are sparse. It helps to imagine the way that you or others would list or describe what you're looking for online, then enter it, and hopefully you'll come up trumps.

FAQ

Standing for 'Frequently Asked Questions', this is a well-used method of providing support on the Web. Traditionally, a site that offers a service should also offer some assistance or 'online help' to advise users on known issues or problems. These are often questions raised by people visiting and requiring help, or can be anticipated problems that may arise. The most common are answered and compiled into a list called an FAQ. To the best of our knowledge there have never been any recorded cases where using an FAQ has required an FAQ – so they're obviously pretty straightforward!

Q&A
Web browsing

EMAIL **CLIVE PARKER** AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK** THEN SIT BACK AND RELAX WHILE HE SORTS OUT YOUR LIFE



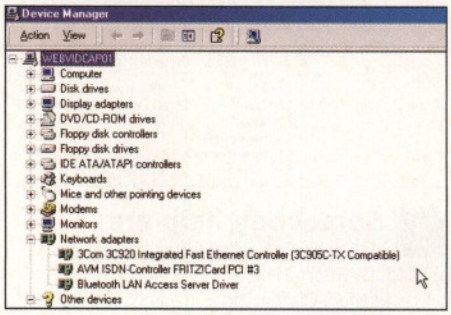
Connecting up your home PCs needn't turn into a mess of cables and plugs

Networking problems

Q I've set up a home network for the three PCs we use in our house: two desktop PCs and a laptop with built-in EtherNet. One PC has a kind of 'hub' PCI card with four sockets for network cables. The other PC has a single socket PCI card. Although all of the PCs use Windows XP Home Edition, I can't get the network to work. The PCs just won't talk to each other. According to the Device Manager on each computer, the EtherNet adapters are all working properly, but I keep getting an error message pop up on the laptop and on one of the PCs saying that 'a network cable is unplugged.' I purchased the EtherNet cards and cables in a boxed kit from PC World.

Sam Phillips

A **I think that you are right – the drivers for your EtherNet adapters have been installed correctly. In fact, Windows XP Home Edition probably installed drivers from within itself rather than using the software supplied in the kit. I think that the clue lies with the error message about a cable being unplugged. I suspect that the cables supplied with the kit are not wired correctly. There are two types of LAN cable; one type connects between PCs and a network hub, the other type connects between two PCs. They look exactly the same, but the PC to PC cable – also called peer to peer – crosses over two of the wires. Because your kit comes with a 'hub' style PCI card, I think you need standard LAN cables, but the kit came with cross-over LAN cables. Buy a standard LAN cable from a proper computer store or from Maplins and see if it works. With both PCs on, plug one end into the 'hub' PC and the other into your other desktop PC. When you plug in to the second PC a green light should come on on the EtherNet card, showing that the cable is wired correctly.**



Taking a look at the Device Manager will tell you if the drivers for your EtherNet cards are installed properly

Image size

Q I have just purchased a Canon Powershot P90 digital camera and I would like a little advice. I am a total beginner when it comes to digital photography, and I'm not sure what size images I should use. It has three image size settings: 1856x1392 pixels, 1024x768 pixels and 640x480 pixels, and there are three different settings for compression. I will be using the camera both for print and for Web pages. What are the best settings for each use? And although I have a colour printer, I would like to get my images professionally printed. Where can I do this?

Mike Lomas

A **If you are going to take pictures to be printed on good quality paper by a professional printing service, you need to take pictures at the highest resolution and use the lowest compression. The higher you set the compression, the lower the quality of the final image. So for traditional style prints at 6x4 inches or 7x5 inches you should go for 1856x1392 and the lowest compression setting. This means you'll get fewer images on the memory card, but you can always buy a bigger card. Canon digital cameras use Compact Flash memory cards – I recently bought a 128Mb Compact Flash card for £45. If you shop around you should find similar prices for memory cards.**

This is true for all varieties of memory card. Your local camera shop should be able to provide prints from JPEG images on a CD. The London Camera Exchange charges 25p per print for 7x5inch photos if you order over 20. They have a sliding scale of prices; the advantage is you get to choose the pictures you want printed, so there shouldn't be any images you end up throwing away.

When taking images for use on the Web you can use lower quality settings. Use 640x480 pixels as the image size and set the compression to 'Normal'. You should be able to take loads of photos at this setting. And if you do take pictures at higher settings, you can reduce them in size for use on the Web using your graphics software.

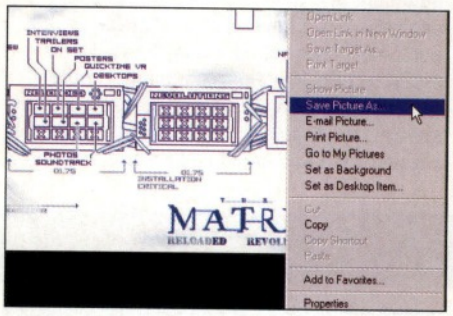
Copy protection

Q Is there a way of preventing a person from copying a picture you have sent them via email? I have an up-and-coming Web site and wish to send a colleague a banner

which I have spent a few hours working on. It is more of a goodwill gesture to let them know we are out there, and explore the possibility of swapping links and sharing info. My fear is that certain individuals may utilise others' labours unprofessionally. I am aware of software that supposedly protects Web pages, but there's always the print screen button and image editors handy. Any tips please?

Mike Szpak

A **I'm a bit confused by your question but I think I get the gist. In answer to the first part, there is no way to stop someone copying an image file you have sent them. Once they have the file they can do what they want with it. The second part of your question relates to protecting files in Web pages. There are pieces of JavaScript you can install on a Web page to prevent anyone from right-clicking on an image and saving it. You could also place an invisible layer over any image you want to protect, so visitors to the page will right-click on the layer and not the image itself. But it's still possible to copy images on Web pages by hitting the Print Screen button and pasting it into an image editing program, or you can just use the Save As... command in the Internet Explorer 6 File menu and save the complete page that will include all images. You could use a graphics application to place a watermark in your images, but that would probably spoil the page. Personally, I think it's always possible to download images from Web sites.**



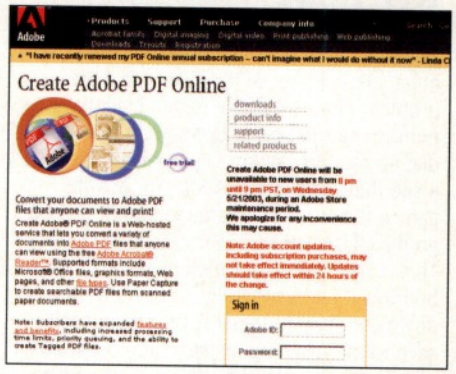
Want to 'borrow' images from The Matrix Reloaded Web site? Right-click on them and Bob's your mother's brother...

Printing Web pages

Q I want to be able to print out a Web page as a single image or document. Using the Print command works to an extent, but I would like a single JPEG image of the whole page which is several screens in length. Any ideas?

Tracy Comer

A **You could use the Print Screen button to save the visible portion of the Web page onto the clipboard and paste it into a new document in a graphics application. Then scroll down to the next part of the Web page and use the Print Screen command again. You will have to cut and paste and generally juggle the images about to assemble the final image. An alternative is to convert the page into a PDF file. Adobe Acrobat 6 is quite expensive to buy unless you intend to use it on a daily basis. There is an online conversion service you can try, though. Click on the button at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat for a free trial. goBCL at www.gohtm.com has an alternative tool called BCL easyPDF 3.1 that costs $49 (£30) and has a five cow rating from Tucows.**



Adobe has an online conversion service with a free trial available, probably indicating that you will eventually have to pay for the service

Don't kill the messenger

Q I am using a Dell laptop with Windows 98 and Internet Explorer 6 to access the Web. I have been using Yahoo! Messenger for voicemail and Webcam activities for a while, but since I had to reformat my hard drive and reinstall Windows 98 (don't ask) I can't get it to work. Every time I try to use it I get a message that pops up to tell me that Yahoo! Messenger won't work through a firewall, but I don't have a firewall installed! I've checked all the usual settings such as proxy and HTTP, but nothing seems to work. I've even set up Yahoo! Messenger with no proxy and no network detected setting, and I can't connect at all. Any idea how I can fix this?

Rupert Russell

A **Reinstalling Windows 98 shouldn't affect using your Webcam and Yahoo! Messenger unless you performed a clean install rather than an upgrade or repair installation. If you performed a clean install of Windows 98, you may have to reinstall the drivers for your Webcam along with any other hardware you use on the PC. You can use the original CD that came with the Webcam or download the drivers from the manufacturer's Web site; drivers are usually downloaded from the support area of hardware Web sites. You might want to check the settings for your Internet connection – does your service provider require you to use a Web proxy? If**

Networking Macs

Q I have an Apple Mac G4 running OS X 10.2.5 and a PC running Windows XP Professional. I want to share data between them – at the moment I transfer files from PC to Mac with CD-RW discs, but the Mac only has a standard CD-ROM drive so I can't get data from the Mac to the PC. I know the Mac has built-in EtherNet capability and I've purchased a network hub, EtherNet card for the PC and a couple of LAN cables. I know how to plug them together and how to set up Windows XP networking, but I'm not sure how to set up networking properly in Mac OS X. I use Norton Internet Security 2003 (NIS) to protect my PC and I have used the Home Networking panel to insert the IP number of the Mac to allow access to the PC's hard drives. But every time I boot up the Mac it has a different IP address and I have to change the settings in NIS again.

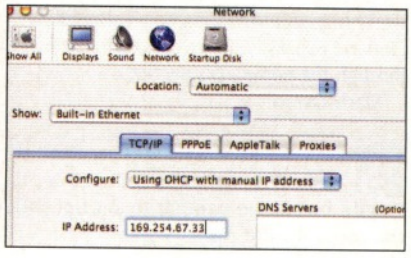
Mark Ashton

A **It sounds as though you are making a connection to the PC from the Mac okay initially, but you want to find a way to make the Mac retain its IP settings in the Network control panel. Follow the steps below to solve your problem.**

1 Start up OS X and log in as an administrator. Go to the Dock and click on the System Preferences icon, then choose the Network icon. On the TCP/IP tab you should see the the Configure menu is set to Using DHCP and the IP Address is self-assigned.

2 Click on the Configure pop-up menu and select the 'Using DHCP with manual IP address' option.

3 You can now use the existing address in the IP Address field or insert your own. Make a note of the IP address and use it in the Home Networking tab of Norton Internet Security 2003. Click the 'Apply Now' button in the Network window.



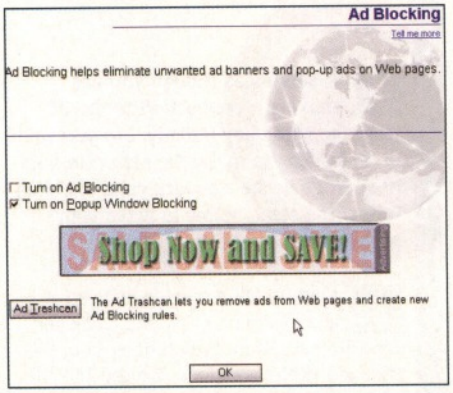
so, you may need to enter these settings into Yahoo! Messenger. Have you got any antivirus software installed? This may be blocking access to the Yahoo! Messenger. Check the settings of any antivirus or Internet protection software to make sure it permits Yahoo! Messenger to function.

Pop-up

Q What's your advice for the best ways of getting rid of pop-up windows, Clive? I've tried all manner of programs and utilities, and they always end up not working at all or causing every new window I open to close down instantly. I'm using broadband, so it's not a speed issue at all, but I just want those bloody annoying porny adverts to stop cropping up when my kids are using the Net.

Errol Ewing

A The pop-up blocker I use is part of my Internet protection software. I use Norton Internet Security 2003 to protect my PCs from viruses and probes from hacking programs. Part of the suite is an excellent ad-blocking function. It can strip out banner ads from Web pages to speed up downloading – not a problem with broadband – and it also stops pop-up ad windows from opening without stopping other JavaScript-based functions in Web pages. In fact, it stops pop-ups from automatically opening yet still enables you to open pop-up windows by clicking on links on a Web page. I really do rely on this software to protect my systems – it's well worth the £50 it costs.


Ad Blocking
Tell me more
Ad Blocking helps eliminate unwanted ad banners and pop-up ads on Web pages.
Turn on Ad Blocking
Turn on Popup Window Blocking
Shop Now and SAVE!
Ad Treshcan
The Ad Trashcan lets you remove ads from Web pages and create new Ad Blocking rules.
OK

Norton Internet Security 2003 has one of the best pop-up blocking utilities around – see ***www.symantec.co.uk*** *for more details*

Web trawl

Q I've finally got hold of a broadband account, and I'm really enjoying the huge speed increase it's given me. One problem I have, though, is that I still have to perform all the boring tasks I had to with my dial-up modem. When I spot something I like, a site that's got loads of fonts or MAME games (I'm a bit of an arcade fan), I have to go through each and every file individually. This didn't matter so much with my dial-up, but now it takes me longer to set up the download than it does for them to actually save to my machine. Is there any program I can use to download huge amounts of files from a site for me?

Gregor Stevens

A There is a program that does exactly what you want although it may be discontinued now. It's called Web Magnet by a German company called Data Becker. It's only designed for Windows 95, 98 and NT, but it does work with Windows 2000 Professional and Windows XP Home and Professional versions. It's easy to set up: you just enter the three-letter suffix of the file type you're looking for, such as TTF for font files, type in the URL of the Web site you want to search and hit the 'Go' button. I've used it to download over 2,000 fonts from a single site. If you take a look around the Web or on eBay you may be able to find a second-hand copy.

Double trouble

Q I am wondering if you could help me with a problem that has bugged me for months. I have my Hotmail account running on my Outlook Express 6 on my Windows Me setup. When I retrieve my mail from that account, every email appears twice in my inbox. Also, when I move them to the deleted folder they first appear in pairs, then it refreshes itself and goes back to single emails. I ran several other email accounts that don't do this. Friends have told me they have the same problem with Hotmail regardless of which version of Outlook Express or Operating System they are running. It's a real pain reading one mail and then deleting the other, especially when most of it is junk. Hope you can help.

Sarah Sedgeman

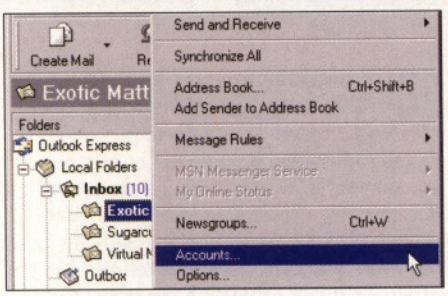
A This problem occurs because you have your Hotmail account set up as the default email account in Outlook Express, and you have it configured to open and directly display the inbox – this downloads email automatically – plus you have it set up to check for new email messages when starting up, which also downloads emails automatically. To stop the duplicates from appearing select one option or the other, but don't have both set up. Go to the Tools menu and select the 'Options' command. On the General tab select the checkbox marked 'When starting, go directly to my inbox folder' or the checkbox marked 'Send and receive messages

Not company policy

Q I work in an office and have access to my company email account using Outlook 2000. I want to be able to access my own POP3 email account while I am at work. I know you can set up Outlook Express 6 to run on the same PC as Outlook 2000, but my IT department won't help me out because it's against company policy. They don't mind me setting it up myself, but won't help out. Any idea how I should set Outlook Express 6 up to send and receive mail through the company network?

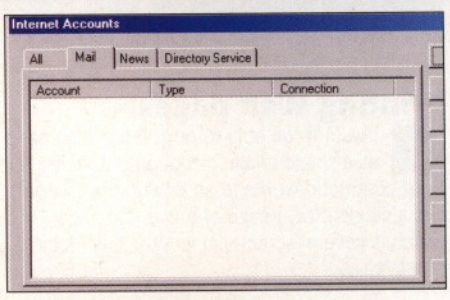
Mark Owen

A As long as your company firewall doesn't block your connection, it should be simple enough to set up. Follow the steps on the right.



1 Get the details ready

Open Outlook Express 6 in the usual way, then go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'Accounts' button. Make sure you have all the details for your POP3 account such as username, password, POP3 server and SMTP server.



2 Take control

The Internet Accounts control panel now opens. Because it's your office PC there shouldn't be any accounts set up. Click the 'Mail' tab, then on the 'Add...' button and select the 'Mail...' command in the menu.

at startup'. If you already have duplicate messages, go to the Tools menu and select 'Synchronize Account' (Internet Explorer 5) or 'Synchronize All' (Internet Explorer 6).

XP go slow

Q About six months ago I installed a brand new version of Windows XP on my PC. Everything went tickety-boo for ages, but over the past couple of months things have really started to deteriorate badly. For some reason, booting up takes about ten times longer than it used to, with the Windows XP loading screen hanging for up to five minutes at a time. I know I've installed lots of stuff on it, but surely Windows shouldn't do this to me?

Hugh Corrick

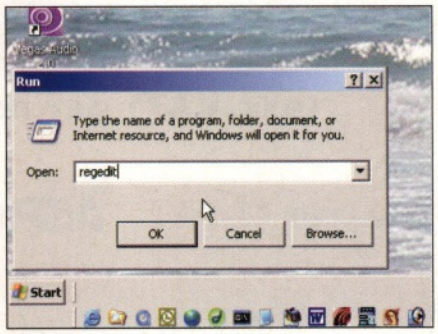
A The reason for the slowdown probably is all the stuff you've installed on your Windows XP PC. It really depends how much you have installed on the PC and what kind of software it is. Some software creates batch files, other software or drivers might be looking for hardware that isn't installed on your PC and so on. One common problem is if you have an EtherNet network card installed when you don't actually connect to a network, the driver keeps trying to connect to a network but can't do so, and this simply slows everything down to a crawl.

To find out the cause of the problem, you can download a tool from Microsoft called 'BootVis', a performance trace visualisation tool for use with Microsoft Windows XP systems. That means it tells you what's loading when you boot up and how long it takes. The download is only 329Kb and it's a great diagnostic tool for Windows XP boot problems. You should be able to get to the root of your problem using it.

Username update

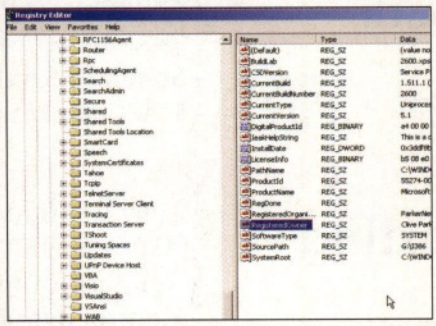
A In last month's Q&A I answered a question from Fadhli who had accidentally entered his username incorrectly when he installed Windows XP Professional. I stated that I didn't know how to change the Windows XP registration information, which was true at the time.

However, being a curious sort of gentleman, I investigated a little further and found out how to change this setting. As is often the case in these instances, it's a Registry Key that has to be edited, of course. Follow the steps below to change the Registered User name in Windows XP. Once you've done this, you can reconfigure your username and password all you want.



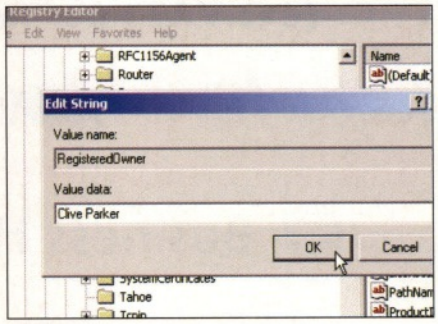
1 Open XP

Open XP, go to the 'Start' menu and select 'Run'. When the dialog opens type 'regedit' into the text field and click 'OK' to open the Registry Editor.



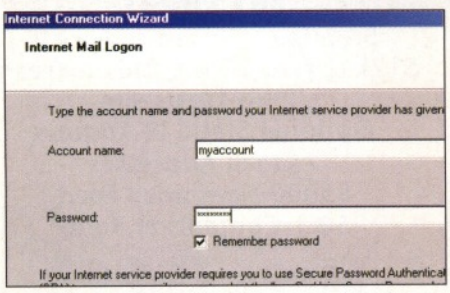
2 Start the search

To search for the key to edit, use the tree in the left pane and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\software\Microsoft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion by clicking on the + symbols next to the folders. Select the CurrentVersion folder. The key you need is 'RegisteredOwner'; it appears in the list on the right.



3 Change the name

When the Edit String dialog opens, delete the name in the Value data: field and insert your own. Click 'OK' to save the change then hit 'Exit' in the Registry Editor's File menu to exit and save the data. When you next use the System control panel your name will appear as the registered owner.

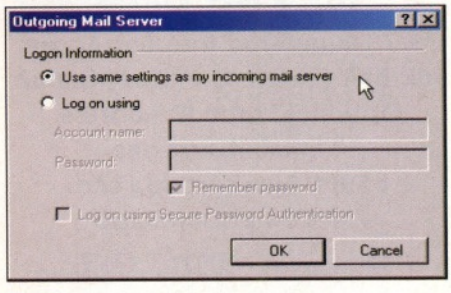

Internet Connection Wizard
Internet Mail Logon
Type the account name and password your Internet service provider has given
Account name:
myaccount
Password:
Remember password
If your Internet service provider requires you to use Secure Password Authentica

3 Follow the wizard

The Internet Connection wizard will now run. Fill in the details of your account in each page; you'll need your username, password and mail server details. Click 'Finish' in the last page of the wizard to save the account settings.

4 At your service

In the Internet Accounts control panel select the account you've set up and hit 'Properties'. In the Properties control panel, click on 'Servers'. In the Outgoing Mail Server section at the bottom select 'My server requires authentication' and hit 'Settings'.



5 The right channels

In the Outgoing Mail Server dialog select 'Use same settings as my incoming server' and click 'OK'. This ensures OE6 sends mail via your email server and not through the Outlook 2000 company server. Exit the panel, and you're set up for email at work.

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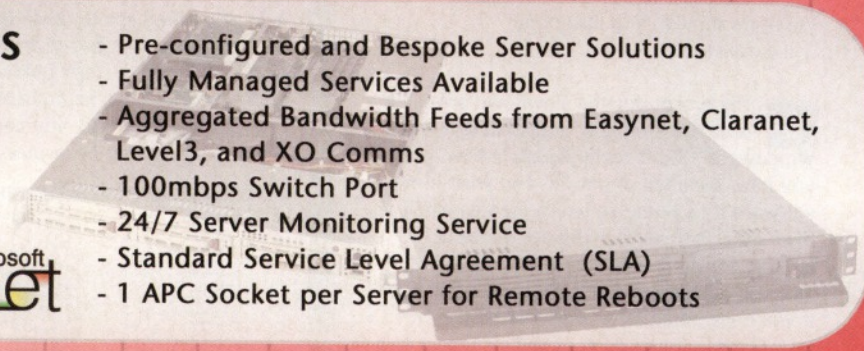

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THE PRIZES

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Second prize
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Clue: Pop along to **www.4dhosting.co.uk/shared.htm** for salvation

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Your Business Online

EXPERT ADVICE ON CREATING PROFITABLE SMALL BUSINESSES

Welcome...

WHAT'S THE FIRST thing you do when you think about starting a new online business? Run to the bank to ask for money? Set up a Web site to garner interest before you start trading proper? These are all well and good, but many of us completely forget to look into the laws that govern Web sites. For some reason, we all seem to have an opinion that, because of its worldwide nature, the Web doesn't have the same rules and regulations as its offline counterparts.

Alas, it does, and the courts look just as dimly on anyone transgressing these laws as with any other crime. Don't panic, though, as we've got the perfect antidote to your cyber law concerns starting on page 102.

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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It may be a rural paradise, but the countryside is being crippled by a 'digital divide'

Rural businesses losing out in 'digital divide'

COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY CALLS FOR ROLL-OUT OF HIGH SPEED CONNECTIONS TO AID RURAL FIRMS

Rural businesses are being crippled by a growing 'digital divide' between the town and the country, according to a countryside watchdog. Despite the fact that the number of broadband connections has reached two million nationwide, the Countryside Agency (**www.countryside.gov.uk**) is calling for an increase in availability of high speed Net access.

Recent research by the agency suggests that, while 95 percent of urban homes have access to cheap broadband, just seven percent of country villages are hooked up to DSL or cable. In more remote parts of the countryside, this figure stands at just one percent.

The Countryside Agency claims this is stifling rural firms and farms which need access to new technology and are forced to take out a costly satellite link if they want broadband.

"This is one reason why rural businesses seem a little less optimistic than their urban counterparts," explained Sir Ewen Cameron, chairman of the Countryside Agency. "Our countryside is a hive of economic activity that plays a major part in driving the national economy, but our report shows that restricted access to broadband is putting rural businesses and residents at a disadvantage."

Sir Ewen also pointed out that high speed Net access offers village residents access to services that no longer have a physical presence locally.

"In particular," he said, "young people living in remoter areas need the same access to the latest entertainment, education and training delivered through broadband."

> **"THE COUNTRYSIDE PLAYS A MAJOR PART IN DRIVING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY" SIR EWEN CAMERON**

The good news for rural businesses is that the Government and BT are working to improve broadband access in the country. BT announced a series of public and private sector partnerships to bring broadband within better reach of rural areas.

Bill Murphy, managing director BT Regions, explained how the telecoms organisation has developed a range of solutions where national, regional and local government organisations could play active roles in building Broadband Britain:

"BT has devised a range of partnership approaches that can be tailored to local circumstances for other scenarios. Some involve direct public investment and public subsidies where there is a risk of communities being excluded from a broadband-enabled society."

News in brief

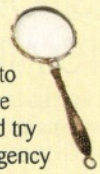
→ Two's up for Telewest

Telewest is providing Internet users with the chance to run a successful online business from home following the launch of its 2Mbps broadband service. The new flagship 'blueyonder' service is 40 times faster than a traditional dial-up service and costs from £50 per month. Blueyonder will retain its existing 512Kb and 1Mb services, allowing customers to choose the speed that's most suitable for their needs. Further details are available from **www.blueyonder.co.uk**.

→ Shoppers' fright

In another blow for eCommerce site owners, Internet users are apparently still reluctant to buy goods online. According to research by Web analytics specialist SPSS (www.spss.com), over 30 percent of Net users have never parted with cash on the Web. Somewhat surprisingly, lack of choice was chosen over security concerns as the main reason people were reluctant to buy online.

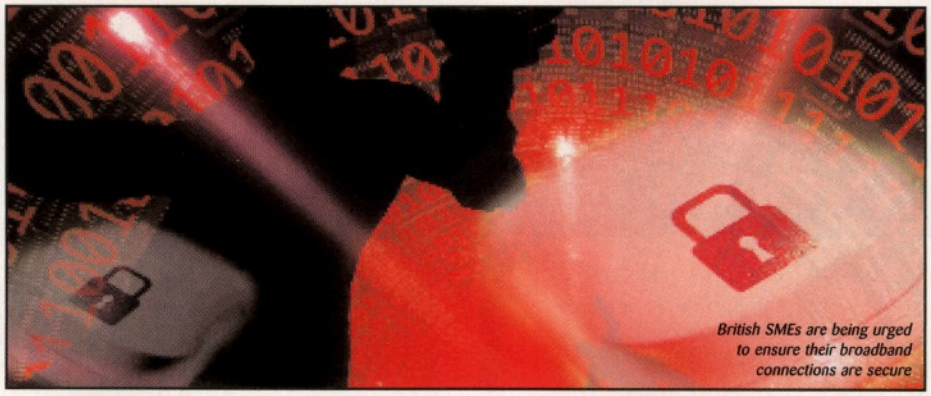
→ Spying tonight



Fancy yourself as a bit of a Columbo, or maybe you prefer to think of yourself as a Morse-type character? Either way, you could try setting up your own detective agency on the Web. According to the investigation and detective agency UK Research Bureau (**www.private-investigator-uk.co.uk**), the Net has been extremely good for business, and the firm now takes 90 percent of its business through enquiries from its Web site.

→ Pick a winner

Looking to take care of your online business without splashing out on loads of different software packages? Winweb has launched a new version of its small business online tools, designed to provide everything you need to set up and run your business. Winweb Office allows you to take care of accounting, domain name, Web hosting, email, Web site templates and much more. The online service costs £19 per month and there's a free trial available from www.winweboffice.com.



British SMEs are being urged to ensure their broadband connections are secure

SMEs count the cost of unsecured connections

FAILURE TO SECURE BROADBAND CONNECTIONS COSTS BRITISH BUSINESSES £2 BILLION A YEAR, REVEALS RESEARCH

British SMEs are paying the price for failing to ensure that their broadband connections are secure.

That's the verdict of Star Internet (**www.star.net.uk**), which has published a report revealing that firms with an always-on connection are five times more likely to suffer from security breaches and hack attacks. According to the research, the revenue loss to the small business sector from security breaches amounts to around £1.95 billion a year.

The survey, carried out by The Yankee Group, suggests that the number of business broadband lines in the UK grew nearly fivefold during last year, and the figures are expected to top half a million connections by the end of this year.

While most companies recognise the massive benefits of broadband connections, few realise the implications that the always-on nature of DSL has for security. The Yankee report stresses that for SMEs, 'always-on' means 'always-vulnerable' and advises firms to take increased security precautions by installing security software, such as firewalls and antivirus applications.

"At the very least, online security breaches cost management and specialist IT time in terms of dealing with problem," said Simon Jackson, marketing manager at Star Internet.

"But the threat is potentially much more significant than that, with worst-case scenarios including the breach of confidential information and the impact that can have on your image and reputation."

UK office workers feel the strain

SURVEY SHOWS THAT MOST OF US ARE BECOMING OVERSTRESSED BY WORK-RELATED MATTERS

If you're finishing a hard day at the office with a bulging headache, you're not alone.

According to a recent study, 67 percent of office workers in Britain are overstressed and taking their problems home with them.

The research, conducted by IT services and training specialists Parity (**www.parity.net**), revealed that unrealistic workloads rankle most, with 16 percent of respondents citing this as the main reason for stress. Others included job insecurity (14 percent), long working hours (14 percent) and colleagues' incompetence (13 percent).

"These findings confirm there's definitely a problem with the way the UK as a whole approaches work," said Rick Bacon, managing director at Parity Resourcing Solutions.

Among possible solutions are for firms to operate flexible work hours, adopt teleworking policies so staff can work from home, and encourage employees to take more holidays.

Bacon added: "As staff are the most important asset of a company, managers simply can't afford to take a laissez-faire approach to tackling employee stress."

Your Business Online Q&A

EVERY ISSUE, OUR RESIDENT EXPERT, **GERARD LISTON** FROM SMALLBIZ UK, ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS. CONTACT GERARD BY EMAILING **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR VISITING THE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE WEB SITE AT **WWW.YBOANSWERS.CO.UK**

THIS MONTH, WE LOOK AT A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED REGARDING LEGAL MATTERS, AND RESPONSES FROM OUR LEGAL CONTENT PARTNER – LEGALPULSE.COM

Q Do employees accrue annual leave when they are off sick? I have an employee who has been absent for all but two weeks since April 2002 – do I have to pay her annual leave this year?

Sharon O'Connor

A **There was a decision on an Employment Tribunal case made, oddly enough, in April 2002 on this very subject. This concluded that, under the Working Time Regulations, workers do accrue holiday leave when off sick. So, even if they have used up all their contractual sick pay and SSP and are being paid nothing, they'd still be entitled to four weeks holiday pay each year.**

This begs the question – why is she still employed? If it is a sentimental decision based on your loyalty to your workforce, then good for you. However, if you are still employing her because you think it is costing you nothing, think again. It will cost you a minimum of four weeks pay each year.

Q I need to know where I stand when the lease states that the owner of the building must paint the outside within six months of the start of the lease. With time just about up do I withhold rent until it is painted?

Meagan Panno

A **Don't withhold your rent unless you talk to a solicitor – deep trouble can follow, including eviction. There are mechanisms (mainly the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) that can be used to force landlords to carry out repairs. You could even carry out the decoration yourself and deduct the cost from the rent. However, there are set actions you must take (such as giving notice and getting three quotes), so legal advice is essential.**

What are you going to lose as a result of the landlord not doing this? It's not like the house is about to fall down, but if you were trying to sell your leasehold then you may be able to demonstrate (via a report from an estate agent or surveyor) that the poor finish to the exterior resulted in your property being lower in value (which would be a significant amount).

If you've suffered damage you can sue your landlord either for monetary compensation or for 'specific performance'. This is where the court 'requires' the landlord to decorate. He might mess you about, but defying the court would be a whole different matter.

Q I am a director of a limited company with one other company director. We have equal shares. In February we had a dispute, which could not be resolved. He refused to put anything in writing and only wanted to talk over the phone. I recently found out that he has registered another limited company and is trading against me. Can I force him to resign? Can I introduce another director?

Ron Shedd

A **The problem here is that this is a 'deadlock company'. It illustrates that 50:50 shareholding on its own is a bad idea. A properly drafted shareholders' agreement would prevent these problems arising by requiring agreement on important decisions and some kind of mediation where and when agreement cannot be reached.**

In this case the only way out is through an application to the court. If you can persuade the court in your favour, the company will then have a claim against the rogue director for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, breach of the director's service agreement (if there was one in the first place), passing off and infringement of a registered trademark (if the name in question is registered in the UK). It is almost certainly a breach of the common law duty of confidentiality.

You should probably call a board meeting (giving the appropriate notice) and seek to pass resolutions authorising the taking of legal action, appointing another director or directors and perhaps most importantly changing the bank mandate to remove the rogue director as a signatory on the company bank account. If you can't do this because the company is deadlocked, you may have to take action in a personal capacity as a shareholder.

Litigation is very unattractive; mediation or some other form of Alternative Dispute Resolution will be quicker and 1cheaper. Whatever else you do, you should take immediate legal advice from a reputable solicitor and focus on the issues we have addressed here.

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VidZone
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How we built VidZone.tv

AS THE MUSIC INDUSTRY STEPS UP ITS EFFORTS TO BRING DOWN FILE-SWAPPING CLIENTS, **JAMES THORNTON** FINDS OUT HOW A START-UP IS PIONEERING SUBSCRIPTION-BASED MUSIC VIDEO STREAMING ONLINE

Following the events of recent months, the recording industry is developing a reputation as a bit of a whinging tell-tale. Constantly moaning about plummeting CD sales, the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) has run to the courts at every opportunity, telling tales on Napster, KaZaA and Morpheus, and blaming the file-sharing clients for its misfortune.

Wouldn't it be great if the high court judges, like parents and teachers through the ages, simply told the RIAA to ignore these bullies and stop dobbing on them? After all, this organisation is supposed to represent a group of talented, creative, forward-thinkers who should be more than adept at finding a way to earn a crust.

Luckily for thousands of artists out there, the record companies are beginning to dust themselves down for a fight. This time though, they won't be running to the courts and hiding behind the nice judge. No, this time the music industry wants to stand on its own two feet and fight the file-sharing clients in their own backyard – the Internet.

VidZone chief Adrian Workman is optimistic about profit

It appears that subscription-based music download services are the industry's best hope of combating the problem of illegal file sharing. While many observers expressed doubt over whether legitimate services could tempt people away from P2P clients, clear signs of progress are now being seen. For instance, Apple's iTunes online music service had two million songs downloaded in its first fortnight.

In the zone

Another legit music service that's making a big noise is VidZone, the UK's first contemporary music video streaming site, offering unlimited access to music videos for £2.99 a month. The company, which grew out of the ashes of the Ichoose TV service, has signed partnerships with some of the biggest labels in the industry including Universal, Warner, V2 and Ministry of Sound. As a result, it's able to serve up past and present music videos from acts as diverse as Eminem, Blur, Dire Straits and Ms Dynamite.

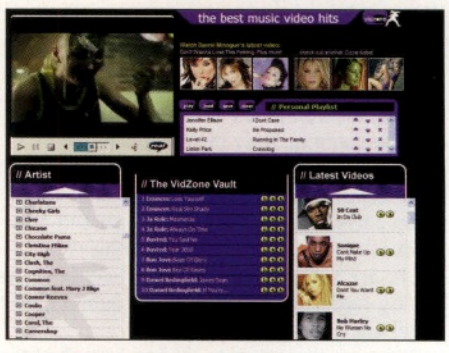
VidZone's managing director Adrian Workman is adamant that, given the rise in high-speed Net connections, his company can profit from the massive demand for music and video content. "Ichoose TV was an ad revenue model Web site which was flawed for many reasons, not least because the broadband users two years ago in the UK were negligible," he explains.

"When we founded VidZone we did so with the aim of making the user pay for our music video content, given that VidZone was being forced to pay dearly for the content from the record labels."

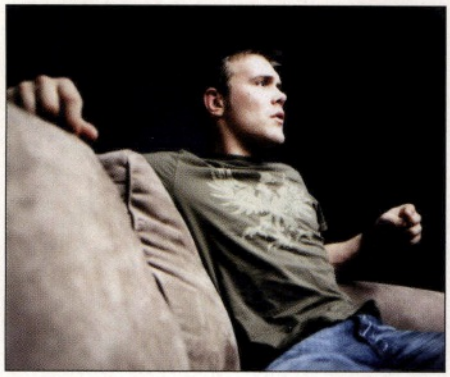
Workman adds: "It was also our intention to create a site where the user could get quickly to the content with very little text in between, as we felt that the music videos were the story – I believe we have achieved both these objectives."

Fighting back

While the VidZone chief remains cautious of the fact that file-sharing clients still rule the roost when it comes to getting hold of digital music, he is adamant that the quality, reliability and ease-of-



VidZone's Playlist allows users to queue up videos and flick between them by clicking on a picture of each artist



Daniel Bedingfield knows a thing or two about technology, and he also knows a bit about growing small beards as well

Controversy has followed t.A.T.u every step of their short careers, but VidZone offers you the chance to see their greatest moments

Ms Dynamite has made a big impression since she exploded onto the music scene. Catch her at her best on VidZone

use of a pay-for service is enough to tempt people away from P2P networks.

"Simply put, KaZaA and Morpheus are illegal," Workman reminds us. "VidZone is a legitimate Web-based product, with the direct support of record companies, artists, online promotion companies and publishers. VidZone subscribers don't need to download large, time-consuming files that can leave their PC open to viruses and hacking, as well as overload their hard drive with heavy files."

Workman also points out that KaZaA users are unable to pre-empt the quality of their downloads, and it has a tendency to drop pop-up ads and spyware all over their desktop.

He adds: "KaZaA is an aggressive desktop application that takes over your PC – but then what do you expect for nothing?"

> **"CREATIVELY, I THINK WE HAVE ONE OF THE FUNKIEST MAINSTREAM SITES ON THE WEB"** ADRIAN WORKMAN

Dressed for success

The site's initial success suggests there is a market for music-on-demand services such as VidZone. The destination currently has in excess of 15,000 visitors per day, but as Workman is quick to stress, the real challenge comes in converting these visits into paying punters. One of the ways it's attempting to do this is by serving up a free 14-day trial which users can cancel before a payment comes out of their account. The site also contains free previews, which get about a whopping 150,000 plays per month. Of the 1.7 million UK broadband users the company markets to, VidZone has a penetration of 2 per cent, which isn't bad for a start-up.

Ultimately the biggest factor in the success of an online music channel is its selection of artists and tracks. After all, who wants to download or stream from a site that's just full of stuff from The Wurzels or The Grumbleweeds? Luckily, VidZone offers a fairly eclectic mix of mainstream artists plus material from a handful of lesser-known acts from independent labels, which lends itself to a broad audience. However, it seems many of the site's visitors stream the videos for more than just their musical attributes: "The most popular videos tend to have a female bias or are uncensored, as most of our subscribers are male. When t.A.T.u were banned from TV as having too much of a lesbian bias, our user stats were overloaded. The raincoat brigade came out in force…"

The company has oodles of creative freedom in how it packages the content to its customers. One of the most innovative features of the site being its 'Playlist', which lets users queue up videos and flick between them by clicking on a picture of each artist. Workman feels this creative freedom stems from the fact that the company is financially independent and doesn't have to pander to the wishes of investors or venture capitalists.

"When I was at Ichoose TV, we did about 50 presentations to VCs. I was astounded with their lack of creativity and foresight, and vowed never to go down the VC route again. Creatively, I think we have one of the funkiest mainstream sites on the Web today. It's simple, easy on the eye, rich in content and changes every other day."

Independent love song

The company is now turning its attention towards negotiating with some of the 400 or so independent record companies in the UK, in an effort to offer a more eclectic mix of streams and push the number of available videos beyond the 5,000 mark. It's also looking to move into the mobile space, with VidZone becoming the destination point for music videos via 3G. For now though, the success of the site is bringing music to the ears of Workman and his team, who are slowly realising that the subscription-based model is one which could feasibly beat the file-sharing clients at their own game.

"I have had emails from new broadband subscribers genuinely excited by what we offer them – these emails have made me proud of what we've achieved in a relatively short time." ■

Site stats

VIDZONE
www.vidzone.tv

- **Who designed it?**
  Mostly in-house with some external design
- **Software used?**
  Runs off a Java Web server communicating with an SQL Server database. Front-end uses JSP. ASP used for the subscription gateway
- **How many people were involved in the beginning?**
  Nine (five in-house, two investors, two external designers)
- **How many involved now?**
  Four
- **How log did it take to create?**
  Nine months
- **Number of daily visitors?**
  15,000
- **Number of subscribers?**
  33,000

TIME SCALE

August 1999 – Video streaming site and forerunner for VidZone, Ichoose TV, is launched

September 2001 – Ichoose TV goes into liquidation

June 2002 – VidZone goes live for the first time, via RealOne's subscription platform

March 2003 – The site is confirmed as the UK's leading music video subscription service

May 2003 – VidZone strikes a partnership with NTL to offer three months' free access to the service for NTL Home subscribers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who upgrade to 600Kbps or 1Mbps services

Keep your site on the straight and narrow

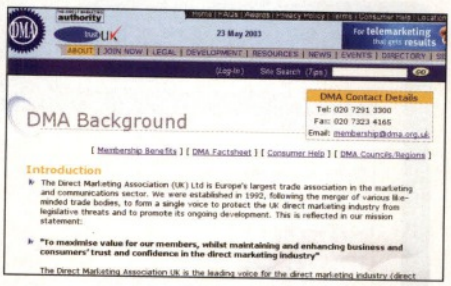
DON'T FALL FOUL OF ECOMMERCE REGULATIONS – FOLLOW **CINDY DUFFIELD'S** GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THROUGH THE LEGAL MINEFIELD

It was just a few years ago that the Internet was seen as 'uncharted territory', where anything could go. Now there's various strains of cyber law which anyone involved with the Net needs to be aware of. The eCommerce Directive, Distance Selling Regulations and the Data Protection Act 1988 are some of the more prominent guidelines by which online businesses must abide to. Copyright and trademark issues, libel, and contractual regulations also spring to mind. While it might be easy to pay lip service to legal obligations, slapping in terms and conditions that are roughly similar to a competitor's, there can be heavy penalties. Twelve months ago, the Information Commissioner was recognised for taking a 'softly, softly' approach when it came to applying the heavy hand of the law. However, its enforcement teams (imagine traffic wardens) now have the power to impose hefty fines and hold company directors responsible – leniency looks to be a thing of the past. And the trouble with the law is that it doesn't stand still. For instance, Nick McConnell, Chairman of the DMA's (Direct Marketing Association) Email Marketing Council notes that by October this year, those operating email marketing initiatives need to implement the 'opt-in' policy. He explains: "Opt-in means that prior consent for a recipient to receive marketing communications must be obtained by the organisation before contacting them." Replacing the established 'opt-out' policy, this new regulation places yet another legal responsibility on Web traders.

Simon Halberstam, head of Weblaw, the IT and eCommerce division of law firm Sprecher Grier Halberstam LLP, cites another regulation made from the stuff of nightmares. "Persons failing to notify the Information Commissioner of their processing of personal data can be fined up to £5,000 in a magistrates' court or penalised with an unlimited fine in Crown Court – you don't get a choice as to which court you end up in, so in effect, lack of compliance is punishable by an unlimited fine!"

It's a minefield

There are a few basic rules that need observing as you wander through the labyrinth that is cyber law. Let's start with data protection. Basically, you need to include a privacy policy

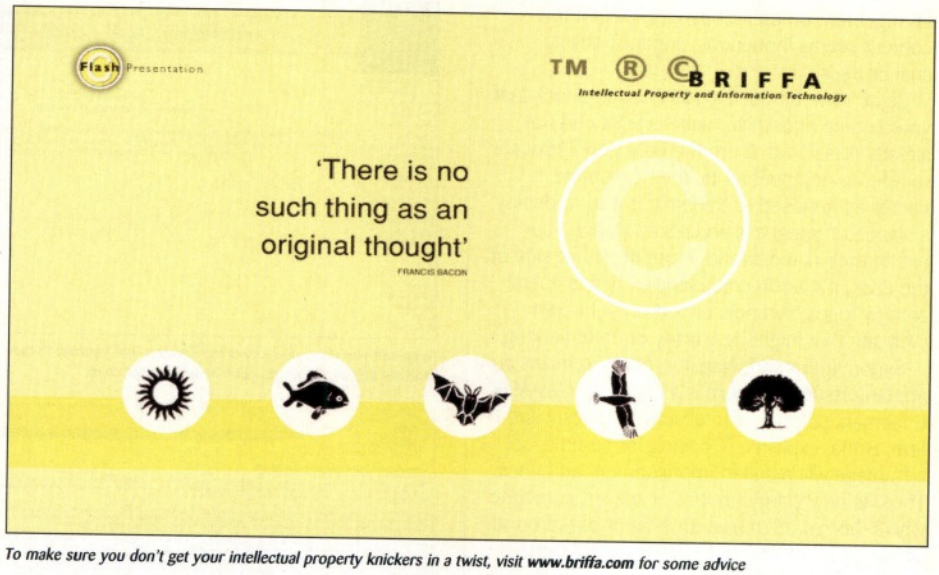


*Any business planning to use direct marketing as part of its strategy needs to visit **www.dma.org.uk** to see what's what*

on your site that outlines what you intend doing with the information collected from customers. A vehicle for the customers' consent must be obvious. If the customer has elected to include their address in their enquiry, they have consented for you to use their personal information, but your published policies should clarify to what extent. You can't collect, store or use personal data on any living third party unless you have registered your uses with the Information Commissioner.

Then you've got distance selling regulations – protection of consumers who are not purchasing from you face-to-face. Your site must provide a clear description of the goods and services offered, your name and contact details, and the price, including taxes, delivery costs and future validity of current costs. Once the consumer has elected to purchase, you must confirm the transaction in writing, providing additional details on how the contract might be cancelled and contact details for subsequent communications.

The consumer has the luxury of a seven-day 'cooling off' period in which they can cancel their order for any reason at all, providing they do so in writing. You, however, have to deliver within 30 days, unless alternative terms are agreed, or hand back their cash.


Flash Presentation
TM ® © BRIFFA
Intellectual Property and Information Technology
'There is no such thing as an original thought'
FRANCIS BACON

*To make sure you don't get your intellectual property knickers in a twist, visit **www.briffa.com** for some advice*

Talking of which, the consumer has the right to cancel a credit card payment without any liability to themselves where there has been fraudulent use of their card, exposing the Web site to a contra payment regardless of whether or not the goods or services have been delivered. Insurance covering this might be a plan.

Look to the future

The Internet provides an international stage on which to display your goods that's accessible night and day by young and old. You may have dotted your 'i's and crossed your 't's to adhere to the law of this land, but what about those further afield? Keeping abreast of changes in international law is a full-time job, so get a lawyer who offers that expertise. Content that might be acceptable over here could be a serious offence elsewhere.

"ANYONE THINKING OF TAKING A LIGHT-HEARTED APPROACH TO THE LAW NEEDS TO THINK AGAIN"

Likewise, if you have the kind of site that's unsuitable for certain ages, you have to take 'reasonable measures' to prevent your goods/services from getting to them. In both cases, filters and ID checks can be applied, which restrict access by geographic region or age group. But you need to ensure that you clearly communicate exactly who is excluded from your content.

The potential of cross-border trading also brings the non-uniformity of VAT to the fore – although it applies within the EU, it's not applicable in other countries. In this case, you need to devote administrative care on both published pricing and customer charges.

Don't be a copy cat

Having become legally cosseted against the wrath of the consumer, there are other legal issues to be considered. Copyright is a big one. One of the joys of the Internet is being able to cut and paste, but be warned: on Web sites copyright can be applied to the words in the text, phrases, symbols, photographs, designs and sounds. If you look at someone else's Web site and decide to reproduce the whole or part of their Web page, that is clearly an

→

Expert tips

RUPERT BATTCOCK, ECOMMERCE lawyer for Nabarro Nathanson, outlines some of his concerns:

"There is a REAL indication that regulators are likely to take a more rigorous approach to policing compliance with relevant laws. This can be seen with the Information Commissioner and the Office of Fair Trading.

"We are shortly to see a big change to UK copyright law as it applies to online businesses. Visit **www.patent.gov.uk/copy/notices/copy_direct2.htm**. While it is mainly of real interest to lawyers, online businesses should be giving some thought as to whether it will affect them.

"In addition to the financial penalties that can occur, companies should bear in mind the reputational risks, the investment risks and the risks in not being able to fulfil relevant business because of non-compliance.

"Businesses need to have a holistic view of he legal issues that are likely to face their particular business.

"Seek sound legal advice to confirm that you are on the right side of the law."

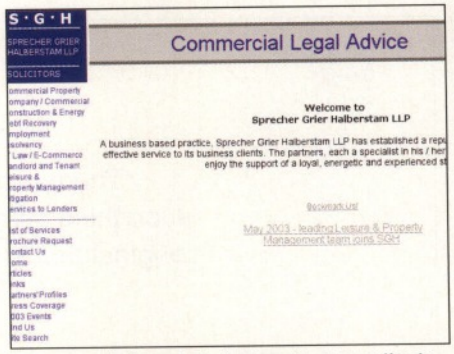
infringement on their copyright, even if the content seems innocuous, administratively anal or trivial.

Right from the outset, you need to check that your choice of domain name is legal and not already registered. From then on, good advice is to refer to competitors by their corporate names as opposed to trademarks and to deploy a stance of openness and acknowledge your use of their name/brand. From the other side of the desk, it's worth considering whether there are any logos, symbols or text on your own Web site that might be worthy of trademarking.

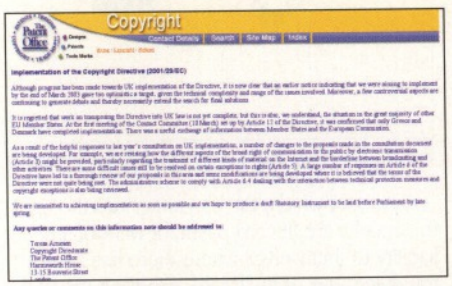
Synonymous with Napster, piracy remains an ongoing issue, but there is a distinction, as Alex Chapman, solicitor at intellectual property and IT firm, Briffa, explains. "Copying for commercial advantage will result in imprisonment and fines. There is now clarity on that. However, someone who's 'borrowed' music for a bit of background will only face damages between the interested parties." Of course, clarification between the two might be a little difficult…

Cut no corners

Anyone thinking of taking a light-hearted approach to abiding by the letter of the law needs to think again. Bear in mind, the Information Commissioner is out there, and undertakes Web site spot checks to survey the way Web site owners communicate their obligations clearly and correctly. Don't for a moment think that online laws differ from offline – it is merely a different route to market and one that is fraught with possibly more regulations because of the worldwide audience. Also, because it's a relatively new entity, traditional regulations might be adapted, but prosecution, fines and imprisonment are still options for those who flout the law.


S·G·H
SPRECHER GRIER HALBERSTAM LLP
SOLICITORS
Commercial Legal Advice
Welcome to
Sprecher Grier Halberstam LLP
A business based practice, Sprecher Grier Halberstam LLP has established a repu
effective service to its business clients. The partners, each a specialist in his / her
enjoy the support of a loyal, energetic and experienced st
May 2003 - leading Leisure & Property Management team joins SGH

To ensure you don't overlook a legal nugget, put yourself in the hands of the professionals, such as ***www.sprgr.co.uk***



For more on how the UK copyright law is set to change, head on over to ***www.patent.gov.uk*** *where it is make patently clear*

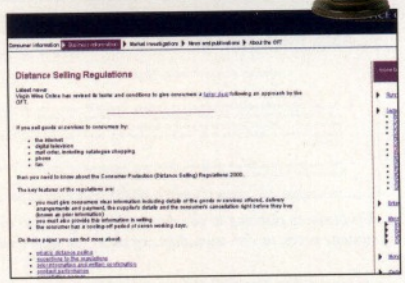
To expect to remain ahead of the game on regulations, locally and abroad, is clearly misconceived. Professional help is required. There now exists a network of law firms who have divisions and distinct companies who specialise in IT, eCommerce and media law and who have the resources to keep abreast of the many changes affecting regulations, both here and abroad. It's worth the upfront investment to protect you from what could be an extremely costly mistake – personally and commercially. Remember, ignorance is no excuse!

International affairs

SIMON HALBERSTAM, HEAD of Weblaw, explains the ramifications of differing international law. "A Dutch company might set up a soft porn site. In Holland, there are no laws against this and in the UK we are very relaxed. However, in the Middle East, the punishment for such a site is not only severe but painful – the laws aren't universal. Ensure that within your terms and conditions you stipulate to whom your site contents are available and that your lawyer checks your status against international laws."

Even the likes of Virgin can get caught out, as Halberstam explains: "The company once advertised on its site a special flight offer from London to New York. The offer was intended for UK customers, but it didn't state that. It also didn't include US tax in the pricing details: an infringement in US law, as was highlighted by distraught US customers."

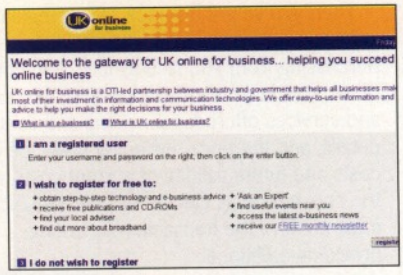
Web resources



Office of Fair Trading

www.oft.gov.uk/Business/Legal+Powers/Distance+Selling+Regulations.htm

This site provides comprehensive details on the Distance Selling (consumer protection) Regulations – what information and terms you must provide to consumers, exceptions and enforcement.


UK online for business
Welcome to the gateway for UK online for business... helping you succeed online business
I am a registered user
I wish to register for free to:
I do not wish to register

UK Online

www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk

Another straightforward overview of the legal issues that should be considered by online traders: endorsed by a Government pledging support for SMEs in eCommerce!

Desktop Lawyer

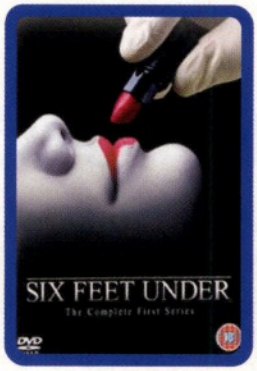
www.desktoplawyer.co.uk

Provides a useful introduction to practically every aspect of the law that you are likely to come across, but beware, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing: inform yourself but use experts to ensure you are operating within the law.

GREAT DVD TITLES - AMAZING PRICES!

~~RRP £24.99~~ **£15.99**

Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers



~~RRP £49.99~~ **£37.99**

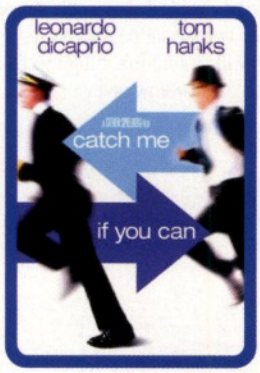
Six Feet Under: Season 1

~~RRP £19.99~~ **£14.99**

Jackass: The Movie

~~RRP £19.99~~ **£14.99**

Star Trek: Nemesis



~~RRP £19.99~~ **£14.99**

Catch Me If You Can

~~RRP £19.99~~ **£14.99**

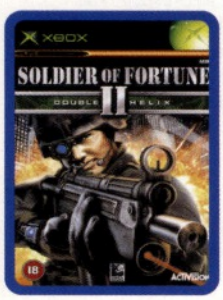
I Spy

PC

~~RRP £34.99~~ **£26.99**

Star Trek Elite Force 2

XBOX



~~RRP £39.99~~ **£32.99**

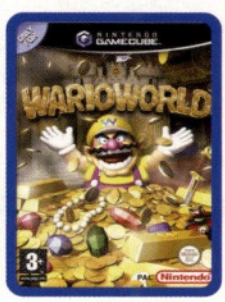
Soldier of Fortune 2

PS2

~~RRP £29.99~~ **£24.99**

Perfect Ace

GC



~~RRP £39.99~~ **£32.99**

Wario World

PLAY.COM

MOVIES MUSIC GAMES

FREE DELIVERY ON ALL ITEMS!

Prices are correct at time of going to press. Play.com reserve the right to change prices. Please check our website for the most up to date prices and product information.

In brief:
Task: Create a business site
Software I need: ZyWeb 3.0 Business
Difficulty: Easy
Time I need: Allow an hour or so

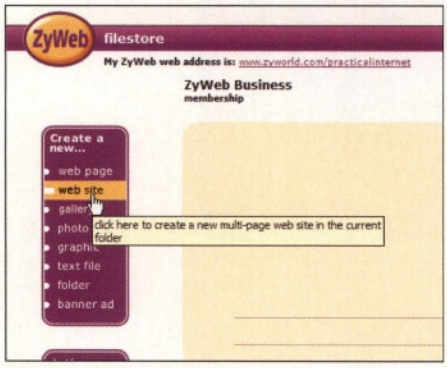
Build a site with ZyWeb

MAKE THE INTERNET WORK FOR YOU BY CREATING A CORPORATE PRESENCE WITH THIS VERSATILE AND SIMPLE ONLINE AUTHORING TOOL

MORE AND MORE tools are available to enable the online entrepreneur to begin dotcom money-making enterprises. Many might find the prospect of designing and maintaining a site horrific, but thankfully there are methods catering for all levels. If you're confident enough to build an empire from scratch then you're probably laughing, but as a handy backup, there are also packages that attempt to take the hassle out of HTML. ZyWeb 3.0 manages to go one better – not only is it a powerful yet uncomplicated authoring wizard, it's based entirely online – meaning you can do all the work directly on the Web.

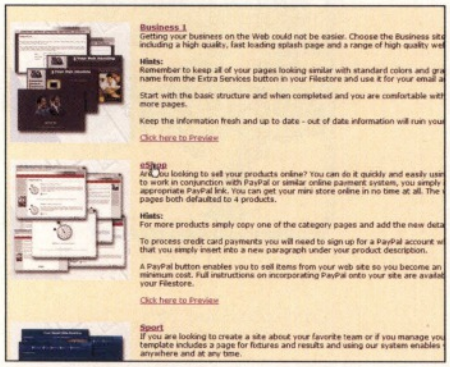
Once you've signed up to the service, ZyWeb has a whole range of well-styled site templates for you to use. These customisable pages act as guides for you to personally edit colour schemes, text and imagery to form a professional identity in no time at all. You can even upload external files such as media content or additional pages that you've designed with traditional multimedia authoring tools such as Dreamweaver or Flash. There's even the facility to register page details with popular search engines – and don't forget the ability to include shopping cart or payment facilities with PayPal.

To explore the many features of ZyWeb, we'll follow the process of signing up for the demo at the site (**www.zyweb.com**) and then building and publishing a car retail site. There will be a simple welcome page, an 'about us' section, and a few pages showing the latest stock. We'll also include an email contact form and learn how to edit page elements along the way.



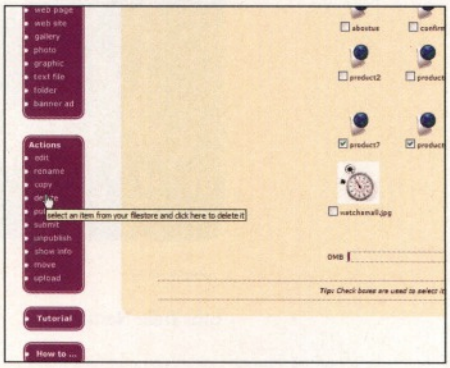
1 Create a site

After logging in, you arrive at the main File Store page. Here you can check how much of your account space has been used and access various functions on the left menu. To get started, click the 'Web Site' option on the 'Create a new' panel.



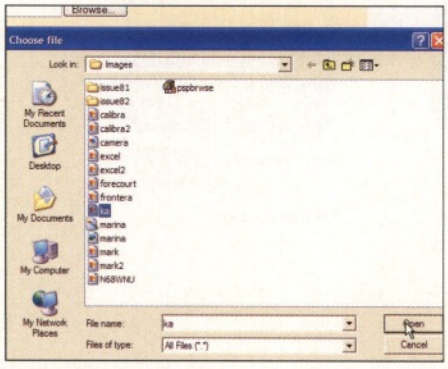
2 Select a style

Let's use the template called 'eshop'. This allows you to display business information as well as an online catalogue. Preview the page style by clicking the 'Preview' link, and then select 'eshop' to create it. The files are then placed into the File Store.



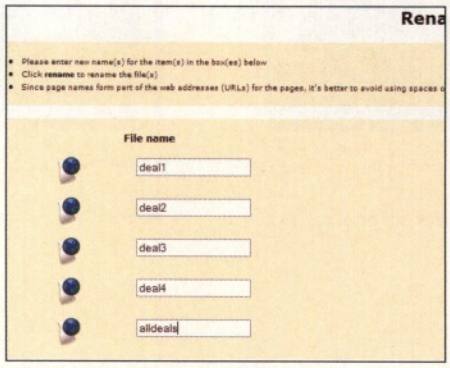
3 Delete pages

We only need four pages for our example, so remove the product pages labelled '5' to '8'. Select each unwanted page in the File Store by checking the tickboxes, and then click 'Delete'. Accept the prompts to return.



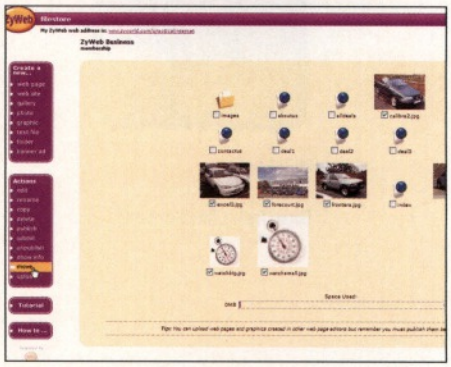
4 Uploading

Now let's upload the files we need for our site. These can be images, multimedia content or HTML pages. We only need a few images for the product pages. Click 'Upload' on the menu and the following page will let you browse for the required files.



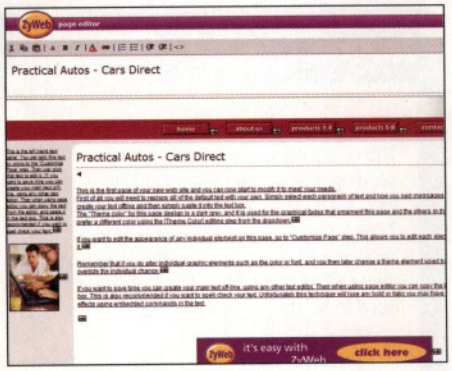
5 Renaming pages

To rename any of your files, select each item from the 'File Store' and click 'Rename' from the 'Actions' menu. You can change multiple files and a page will follow, prompting you for the new names. All existing site links will be updated.



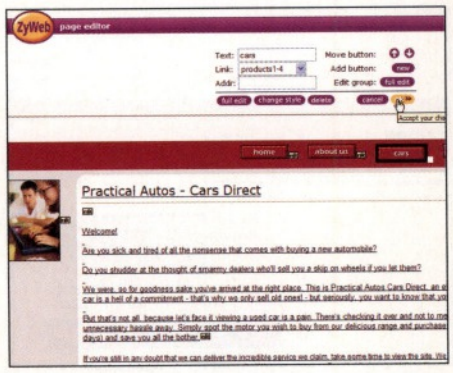
6 Folders

You can create directories with the 'Folder' button on the 'Create a new' menu. Give the folder a name and it will appear in your File Store. Here we have an image folder, and can move selected picture files into it with the 'Move' button.



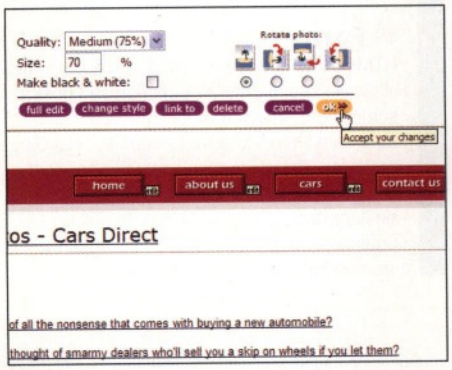
7 Default page

You can edit pages by clicking them from the File Store. We'll start by looking at the default template for the 'Index' page. Notice that text and button elements are shown as guides for you to customise. These can be edited via the top panel.


Practical Autos - Cars Direct
Welcome!
Are you sick and tired of all the nonsense that comes with buying a new automobile?
Do you shudder at the thought of smarmy dealers who'll sell you a skip on wheels if you let them?

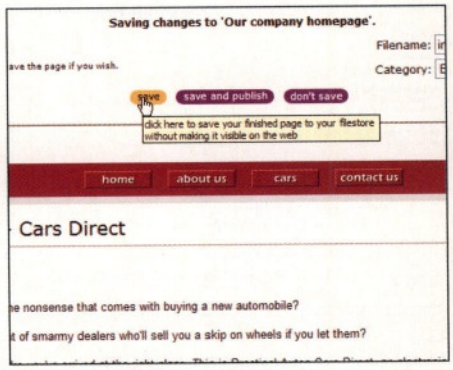
8 Edit elements

To remove any unwanted text paragraphs, images or buttons, select each by its 'Edit' tab and click the 'Delete' button in the top 'Editor' pane. Next we'll select the 'Products 1-4' button and change its label to 'Cars'.



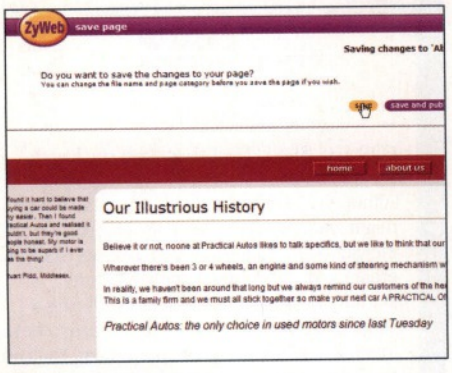
9 Editing images

Click the 'Edit' tab for the image in the left margin. The Edit bar at the top will ask what you wish to do, so click 'From File Store' to replace. Select the correct thumbnail from the list and change the image's properties in the 'Edit' bar.


Saving changes to 'Our company homepage'.
Filename:
Category:
save
save and publish
don't save
click here to save your finished page to your filestore without making it visible on the web
home
about us
cars
contact us
Cars Direct
be nonsense that comes with buying a new automobile?
t of smarmy dealers who'll sell you a skip on wheels if you let them?

10 Save the page

When you've finished editing a page, click the 'Finish' button. You will then be prompted to save any changes you have made, so continue by pressing 'Save'. You may also rename the saved file and select a different category here.


save page
Do you want to save the changes to your page?
home
about us
Our Illustrious History
Practical Autos: the only choice in used motors since last Tuesday

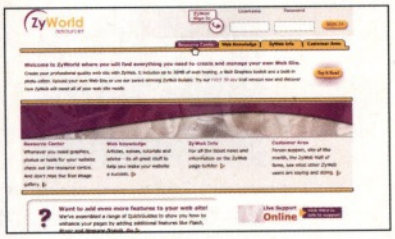
11 About us

This page is simply a way of telling the customer a little more about the company and its history. All we've done here is change the heading as before and inserted our own text. Again, remove any unwanted elements and finish by saving.

12 Catalogue

Individual products are viewed from a main catalogue page linked to the Index. This is where we'll display image thumbnails. The text has also been changed to give basic item information, and the More Info buttons point to each product page. →

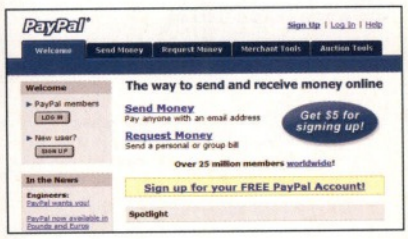
Web resources



ZyWorld Resources

www.zyworld.com

This is a useful companion to the ZyWeb suite and is accessible when logged in or just browsing. Split into four main sections, the site offers lots of free images and clipart that you can add to your pages. There are also downloadable applets and plug-ins for you to embed, along with tutorials telling you how it's done.



PayPal

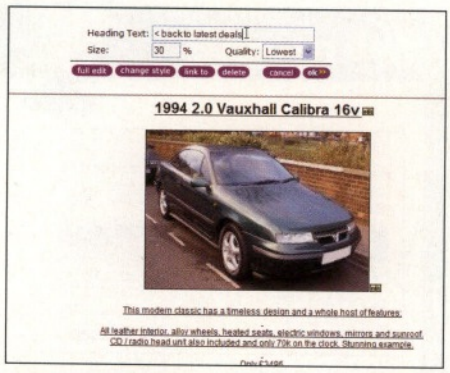
www.paypal.com

Regarded as one of the best and most affordable methods for accepting online transactions, PayPal's services are a useful addition to any corporate site. ZyWeb recommends that if you intend offering customers a shopping facility, including carts and payment forms, this is the place to come.

Power users' tip

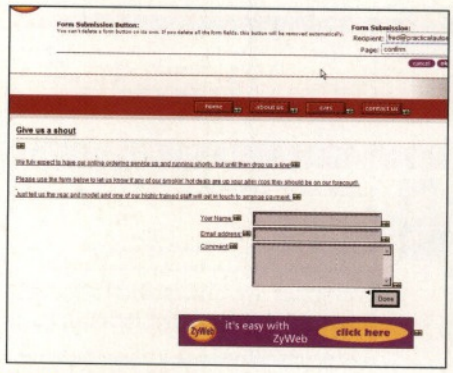
Although ZyWeb goes a long way to making site-building easy, there are ways to avoid possible pitfalls. Designing Web pages and structuring them effectively will always require consideration. Take some time to think things through and plan thoroughly before you rush into building your site. Professional Web authors consider this vital and although it can be a pain, the results will pay off in the long run. Make lists of what the site will contain and what people need to get from it, along with any page elements you wish to include. This will begin to suggest pages and content, and should eventually evolve into a 'sitemap' showing the logical links between them.

Your Business Online
Workshop


Heading Text: < back to latest deals
Size: 30 % Quality: Lowest
full edit
change style
link to
delete
cancel
ok
1994 2.0 Vauxhall Calibra 16v
This modern classic has a timeless design and a whole host of features.
All leather interior, alloy wheels, heated seats, electric windows, mirrors and sunroof, CD / radio head unit also included and only 70k on the clock. Stunning example.

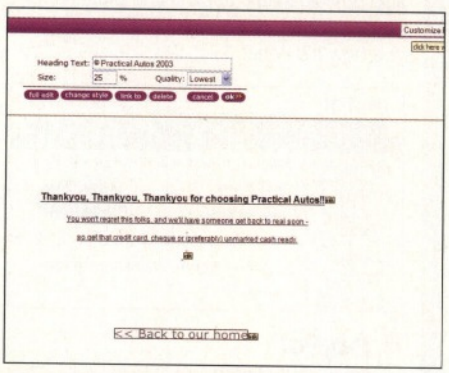
13 Products

Open the 'Product1' page to view the basic template. We've replaced the default image with the thumbnail from the Product Select page. You can add a product title by clicking the image, selecting 'Paragraph' and clicking the 'Above' button.



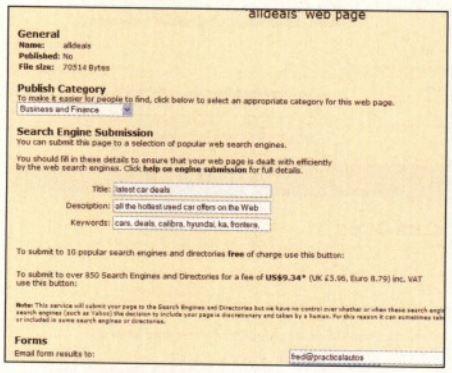
14 Contact us

Without an online 'shopping cart', customers will need to ask for more information. The 'Contact us' page is a simple template with a form already created: all we've done is change the text. Click the 'Done' button to change the email destination.


Customize
Heading Text: Practical Autos 2003
Size: 25 % Quality: Lowest
full edit
change style
link to
delete
cancel
ok
Thankyou, Thankyou, Thankyou for choosing Practical Autos!!!
You won't regret this folks, and we'll have someone get back to real soon -
so get that credit card, cheque or (preferably) unmarked cash ready.
<< Back to our home

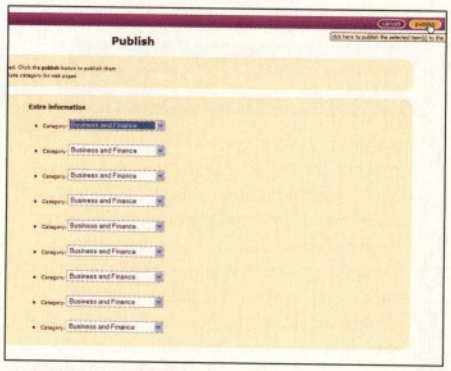
15 Confirmation

The confirmation page is next and will link from 'Contact us' to let people know their email has been sent. We just want to say 'thanks for contacting us' and provide a link back to the home page. Feel free to add more images.


alldeals' web page
General
Name: alldeals
Published: No
File size: 70514 Bytes
Publish Category
To make it easier for people to find, click below to select an appropriate category for this web page.
Business and Finance
Search Engine Submission
You can submit this page to a selection of popular web search engines.
You should fill in these details to ensure that your web page is dealt with efficiently by the web search engines. Click help on engine submission for full details.
Title: latest car deals
Description: all the hottest used car offers on the Web
Keywords: cars, deals, calibra, hyundai, ka, frontera,
To submit to 10 popular search engines and directories free of charge use this button:
To submit to over 850 Search Engines and Directories for a fee of US$9.34* (UK £5.95, Euro 8.79) inc. VAT use this button:
Forms
Email form results to:
fred@practicalautos

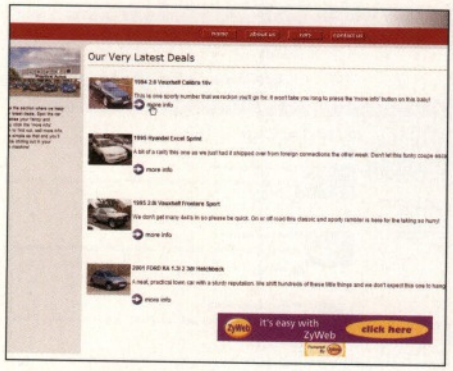
16 Show info

Pick a file and click the 'Show info' button from the 'Actions' menu. This shows general file details, and allows you to submit the page to search engines. By entering title, description and keyword text, you can help people locate your site.



17 Publish the site

This is the bit where the site is 'uploaded'. Select all required pages in the File Store and click the 'Publish' button on the 'Actions' menu. The files will be listed with their categories, ready for you to confirm by clicking 'Publish' again.



18 View it

Once the site has been published, a 'P' icon will be attached to each page within the File Store. To see your site on the Web, click the 'My ZyWeb Web address is:' link in the top left corner. You will be taken to the Index page within your browser.

Jargon buster

Upload

The opposite to download, this refers to sending files to a remote destination. It's likely that you'll create or store elements for your ZyWeb pages on the PC you access the service with. Unfortunately this doesn't mean they can be used immediately, because they need to be transferred to the File Store.

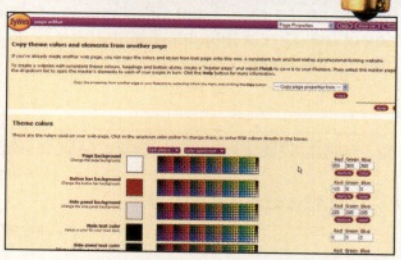
Template

ZyWeb helps you get started in constructing your site by providing some basic page guides or 'templates' for you to tailor. This is very similar to word processing packages that give you default documents for writing letters. Pages are created with the standard elements or objects you may require. These can then be edited to look the way you want.

Form

HTML forms are special areas of the page that allow visitors to enter information and post it somewhere. In our example, the 'Contact us' form is used for customer enquiries regarding products. These are then sent via email to the company for further correspondence. A similar principle is used to accept online ordering and payment details, although these are normally sent more securely.

Power users' tip



FOR THE BENEFIT of space, we stuck with the default page schemes in our example. Although these are perfectly acceptable, you might want to make your pages more individual. To do this, ZyWeb advises that you create a 'master' page template before starting. Basically this involves producing a single page document from the 'Create a new' menu and manipulating its properties. You can set colour schemes and styles for elements such as buttons. Once you have the right look, you can save it as a blueprint for a new site. Edit a page as normal, but select the master page in 'Page properties'. Here you can select the master page to work from or simply pick individual colours and textures.

the devil is in the details...

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Pick the perfect Web hosting deal

USE THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SELECT THE PERFECT HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

SELECTING A WEB hosting company to look after your business is just as tricky as picking the right ISP to connect you to the Internet. There's a baffling array of deals to choose from, each offering slightly different services and each charging slightly different prices. In short, there's no simple answer.

Our aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included (we could probably fill the whole of YBO with them) we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

To use these listings effectively we recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

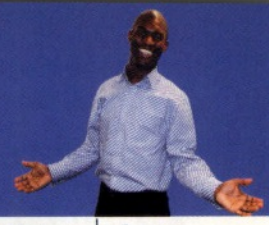
Keeping up-to-date

WHILE WE TRY and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

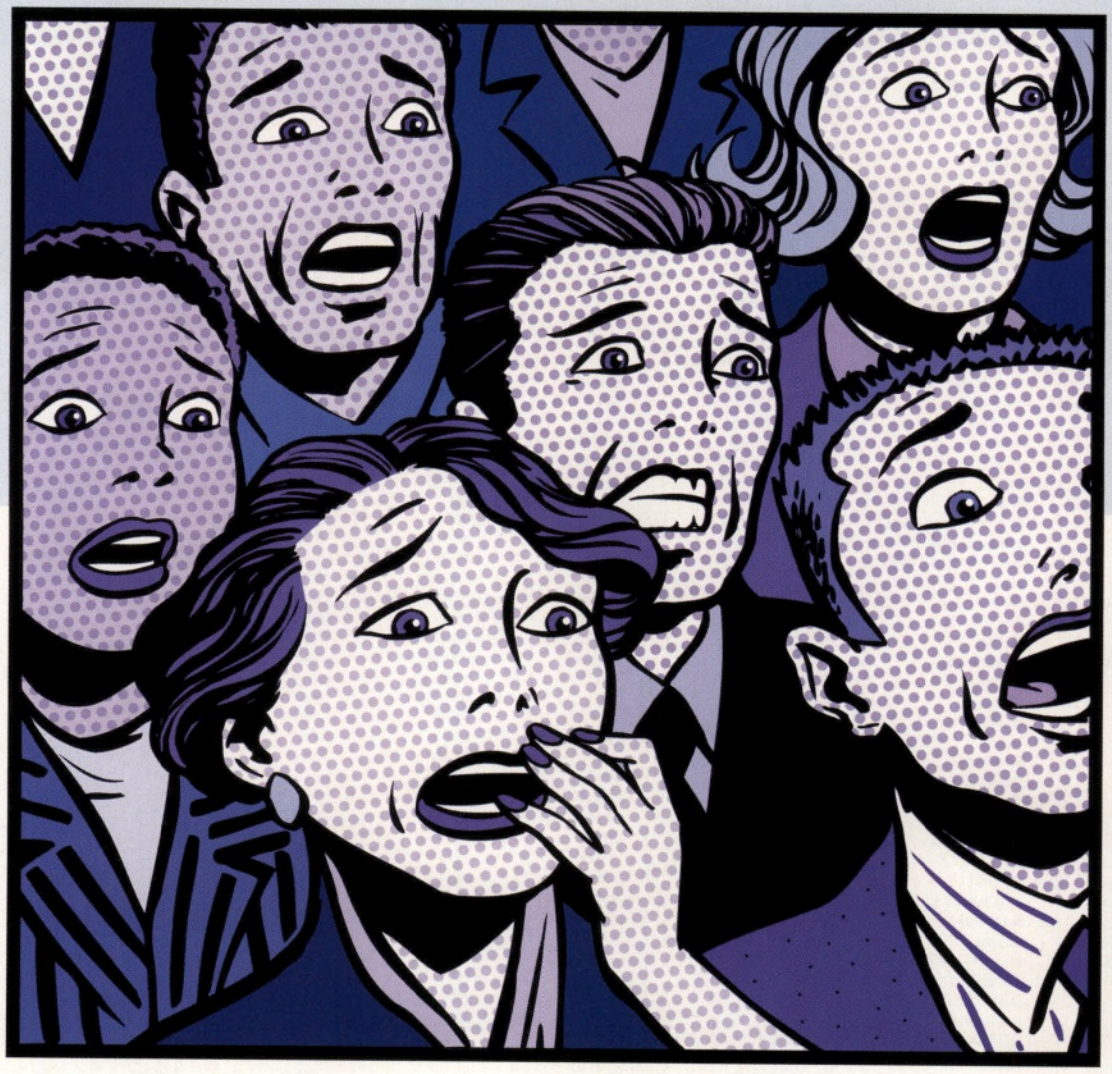
NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Starters	0845 6012 586	£17.88	Yes	15	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Home	0845 6012 586	£59.88	100Mb	50	No	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Business	0845 6012 586	£107.88	300Mb	200	Yes	Yes
1&1 Internet	www.oneandone.co.uk	Professionals	0845 6012 586	£203.88	800Mb	500	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Regular	0900 22 11 123	£45.87	250Mb	10	Yes	Yes
123-reg	www.123-reg.co.uk	Xtra	0900 22 11123	£69.87	500Mb	25	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Standard	0870 739 2020	£100.00	100Mb	15	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	PHP	0870 739 2020	£150.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Cold Fusion	0870 739 2020	£250.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Java	0870 739 2020	£300.00	100Mb	15	No	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£20	10Mb	2	Yes	No
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Silver	0845 1668386	£64.99	25Mb	10	Yes	Yes
4d Hosting	www.4dhosting.com	Bronze	0845 1668386	£79.99	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Active ISP	www.activeisp.co.uk	Small Business	0870 7304000	£143.40	35Mb	10	Yes	Yes
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	promo WebPRO	None	£6	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AMEN hosting	www.amen.uk.com	regular WebPRO	None	£54	100Mb	10	Yes	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	10Mb	08707 449227	£70.00	10Mb	1	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	20Mb	08707 449227	£122.00	20Mb	5	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	50Mb	08707 449227	£190.00	50Mb	5	No	No
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Pro	08707 555565	£99.95	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Premier	08707 555565	£199.95	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise	08707 555565	£349.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Business Serve	www.businessserve.co.uk	Business Serve Enterprise NT	08707 555565	£399.95	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Light	0845 355 1000	£29.99	10Mb	10	No	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Starter	0845 355 1000	£59.99	50Mb	20	Yes	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Soho	0845 355 1000	£99.00	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Enterprise	0845 355 1000	£199.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Professional	0845 355 1000	£399.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£89.99	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£179.99	250Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Basic Plan	None	£167.40	10 MB	5	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Standard Plan	None	£239.40	75 MB	40	Yes	No
Efficient Hosting	www.efficienthosting.co.uk	Advanced Plan	None	£287.40	125 MB	60	Yes	No
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Kick Start	0870 741 5898	£49	50Mb	20	No	Yes
EliteServe UK	www.eliteukserve.net	Business Professional	0870 741 5898	£99.00	100Mb	100	No	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Home User	01452 541260	£60.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Business User	01452 541260	£199.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Ghoulnet	www.ghoulnet.co.uk	Business Web	0800 0747581	£69.00	100Mb	50	Yes	No
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Bronze Hosting	0870 922 4000	£70.50	50Mb	5	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Silver Hosting	0870 922 4000	£264.38	100Mb	10	£50/year	Yes
Gio Internet	www.giointernet.com	Gold Hosting	0870 922 4000	£346.63	250Mb	50	£50/year	Yes
Griffin Internet	www.griffin.net.uk	Windows 2000 Webspace	0870 0007100	£199	150Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Silver	0800 1801880	£89.95	100Mb	5	Yes	No
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold	0800 1801880	£134.55	200Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Gold Plus	0800 1801880	£179.55	200MB	30	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum	0800 1801880	£449.55	500MB	50	Yes	Yes
Hostway	www.hostway-uk.com	Platinum Plus	0800 1801880	£809.95	500Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 50	0870 0500303	£239.88	50Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 75	0870 0500303	£359.88	75Mb	10	Yes	Yes

- Domain Names
- Virtual Web Hosting
- Dedicated Solutions
- Custom Enterprise Servers

- Advanced Control Panel
- Windows or Linux platforms
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
- Award winning Support



NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	POP3 Accounts	FrontPage Extensions	Phone Support
Iomart	www.iomart.com	NT Core Hosting 100	0870 0500303	£1199.88	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Personal	None	£29.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Advanced	None	£89.99	100Mb	4	Yes	No
KCDnet	www.kcdnet.com	Executive	None	£159.99	200Mb	10	Yes	No
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Entry	0115 9170000	£99.95	250MB	1	No	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Pro	0115 9170000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business	0115 9170000	£199	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business eCommerce	0115 9170000	£499	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Toe in the water	020 8426 4446	£49.00	None	None	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Going for a paddle	020 8426 4446	£139.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Dive, dive, dive	020 8426 4446	£287.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Small Business	0870 9059444	£42.00	100Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Business Pro	0870 9059444	£60.00	200Mb	25	Yes	Yes
NetBenefit	www.netbenefit.com	Shared Hosting Package	0800 0724696	£180.00	100Mb	None	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	Homeuser	0800 2987214	£60.00	100Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	Commerce	0800 2987214	£180.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	Reseller	0800 2987214	£450.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Starter	0800 0283639	£131.40	20Mb	1	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Pro	0800 0283639	£191.40	150Mb	20	Yes	No
NetNation	www.netnation.co.uk	Power	0800 0283639	£419.40	300Mb	40	Yes	No
Netway	www.netway.co.uk	Small to medium business	07020 939842	£199.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Development Hosting	0118 959 7200	£150	25Mb	6	Yes	Yes
Oscura Ltd	www.oscura.co.uk	Business Premium Hosting	0118 959 7200	£350	100MB	6	Yes	Yes
PMHIS.Net	www.pmhis.net	Web+	None	£60.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Positive Internet Co	www.positive-internet.com	Shared Hosting	0800 316006	£250.00	120Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Valuespace	0870 7303170	£49.99	100Mb	50	No	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Optisapce	0870 7303170	£99.99	1Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Commercespace	0870 7303170	£199.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS10	0781 628 2991	£10	10Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS50	0781 628 2991	£40	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Saffas	www.saffas.com	WS100	0781 628 2991	£70	100Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Seiretto	seiretto.com	Starter	N/A	£49	15Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Seiretto	seiretto.com	Starter	N/A	£149	300Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Basic	01684 893020	£49.99	10Mb	0	No	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Soho	01684 893020	£69.99	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	£99.99	100Mb	10	Yes	No
Simply.Com	www.simply.com	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	£149.99	200Mb	20	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Entry	01707 885800	£99.99	40Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Personal	01707 885800	£99.99	80Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Small Business	01707 885800	£249.99	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Net Business	01707 885800	£399.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive	01707 885800	£499.99	400Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	Executive E-Commerce	01707 885800	£799.99	600Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Lite 24/7	N/A	£180	25Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Dial4Business	N/A	£120	50Mb	25	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo Daytime	N/A	£180	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Solo 24/7	N/A	£300	50Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Sonnet	www.sonnet.co.uk	Symphony	N/A	£660	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Strongnet	www.strongnet.co.uk	Various	01703 866006	Various	50Mb	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host	0870 1257678	£13.99	35Mb	1	No	Yes
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host Pro	0870 1257678	£23.99	35Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tigress UK	www.tigress-uk.com	Web50	0870 321 9528	£69.99	50Mb	3	No	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Home User Plan	0800 542 6549	£69.99	25Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Tollon	www.tollon.net	Business Plan 1	0800 542 6549	£99.99	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	5 megs	0845 082 0696	£55.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	10 megs	0845 082 0696	£95.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	20 megs	0845 082 0696	£125.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
ValueWebHosts	www.valuewebhosts.com	Plan 1	n/a	£8.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Starter	020 7767 3700	£109.45	10Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Designer	020 7767 3700	£197.45	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Business	020 7767 3700	£274.45	125Mb	40	Yes	Yes
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Commerce	020 7767 3700	£384.45	175Mb	60	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Host	0800 11 77 44	£120	25Mb	12	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Business	0800 11 77 44	£215	50Mb	30	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional	0800 11 77 44	£480	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	Professional Plus	0800 11 77 44	£1980	250Mb	120	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Entry	0115 917 0000	£99.95	250Mb	1	No	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.95	750Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business Pro	0115 917 0000	£199.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business E-Commerce	0115 917 0000	£499.00	250Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Basic Hosting	0800 0151718	£35.00	10Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Economy Hosting	0800 0151718	£50.00	25Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Senior Hostings	0800 0151718	£125.00	50Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.co.uk	Executive Hostings	0800 0151718	£200.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	25Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Professional	0845 126 0325	£59.99	50	25	Yes	Yes
Web Warehouse	www.web-warehouse.net	Entry	0845 126 0325	£40.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Personal Hosting	01784 460896	£39.00	25Mb	20	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Business Hosting	01784 460896	£94.00	200Mb	100	Yes	No
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Premium Hosting	01784 460896	£350.00	500Mb	350	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 1	0845 4584200	£50.00	5Mb	0	No	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 2	0845 4584200	£100.00	25Mb	0	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 3	0845 4584200	£175.00	50Mb	1	Yes	No
Zebra Hosts.net	www.zebrahosts.net	Package 4	0845 4584200	£500.00	100Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 128	0870 6000971	£1,140	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 256	0870 6000971	£1,740	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4i 512	0870 6000971	£2,340	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ4r 256	0870 6000971	£2,3400	20Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ 4r 512	0870 6000971	£2,940	40Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 128	0870 6000971	£3,540	30Gb Unlimited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zen Internet	www.zenwebhosting.com	RaQ XTR 1Gb	0870 6000971	£4,740	80Gb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
ZyWeb Business	www.zyweb.com	ZyWeb Business	01392 209500	£210.00	30Mb	10	No	No



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Reviews

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE LATEST INTERNET SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

Welcome...

WE'VE SOMETHING OF a mixed bag this month, although we're dedicating the Reviews Intro to the auction facilities in AuctionEasy 2.1. As well as the aforementioned, a kind of eBay in a box, you'll also find a spiffing laptop for monitoring those online deals remotely. We then focus our attention on Steganos Security Suite 5, which would be just the thing for safeguarding your potential bidders. Digital imaging is covered too, with Ricoh's latest digicam and ACD's picture-editing suite. So just think of all the fabulous photos you could take of old furniture, stuffed animals and crockery – lovely.

Actually you might prefer snapping Microsoft's new Wireless Optical Desktop Pro, with its snazzy-looking keyboard and mouse. Of course, you could forget the rather desperate metaphors and just enjoy!

Mark Billen, Staff Writer

On test this issue...

114 **Steganos Security Suite 5**
Take total control of your PC with this stunning security application

118 **AJP 8080 Centrino**
Perfect for those on a budget, this laptop packs a powerful punch too

119 **ACD PhotoMaster Suite**
Give your digital images the once-over with this budget package

120 **Ricoh Caplio G3**
With the fastest shutter in the West, this camera takes a fine pic

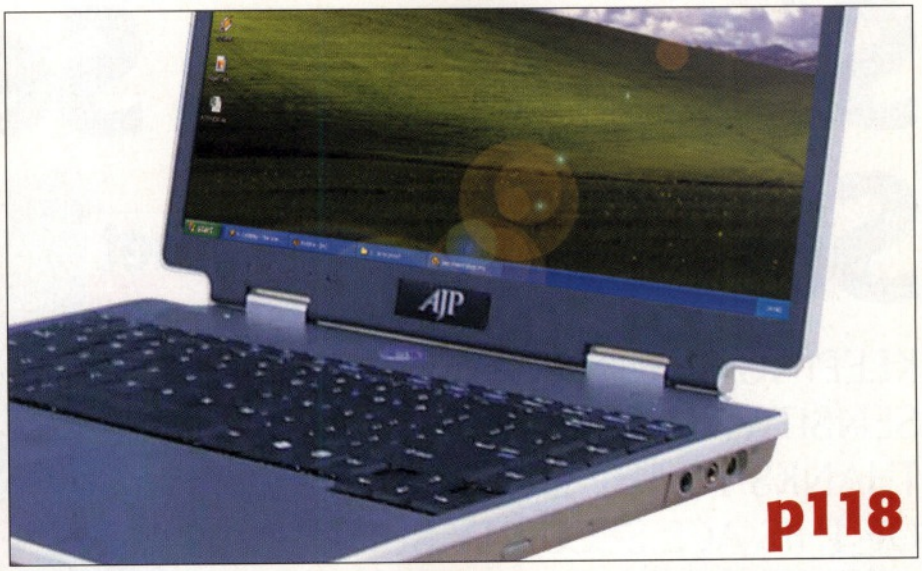
122 **AuctionEasy 2.1**
Generate your own auction site in no time with this powerful suite

122 **Microsoft Wireless Optical Pro**
Free yourself of your shackles with this wireless keyboard and mouse

How our ratings work

Practical Internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★ A truly excellent product you should buy now. Given to scores of 90% or above

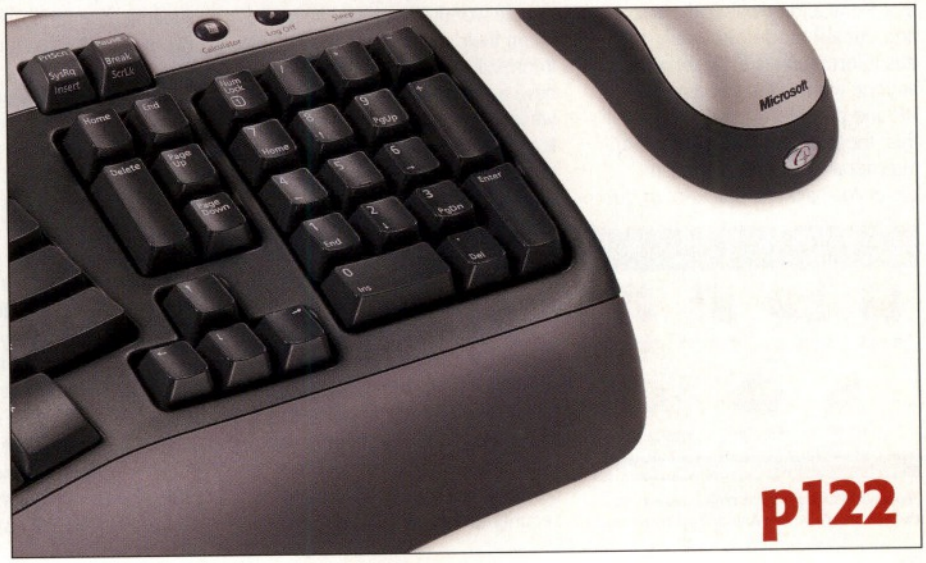
Practical Internet RECOMMENDED It's great, but not totally essential to your well-being. 85% or above



p118

Internet Trace Destructor
Stops XP data transfer
NEW The Safe: 4 secure disks
Encrypt up to 4.8 GB in one second
NEW Steganos Portable Safe™
Your portable safe on CD, DVD, etc.
Encrypt and hide
Conceal your data in images or music
Now even easier:
Password Manager, E-mail Encryption and Steganos Shredder
PC Home Silver Award
gold
BEST BUY
Steganos
Security Suite 5

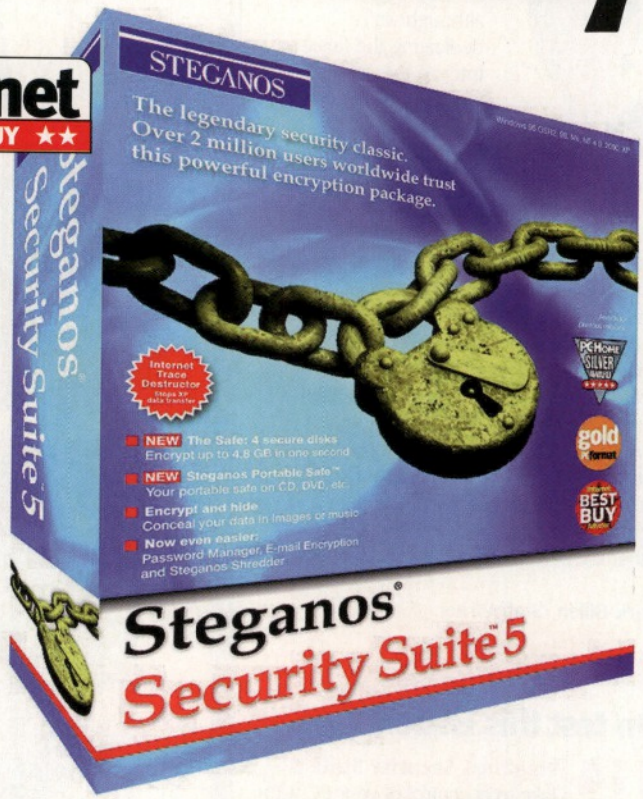
p114



p122

Steganos Security Suite 5

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

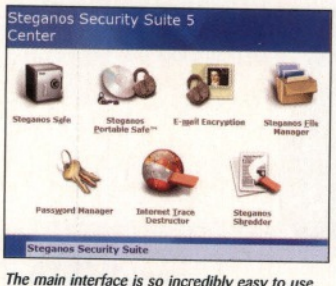

STEGANOS
The legendary security classic.
Over 2 million users worldwide trust this powerful encryption package.
Steganos Security Suite 5
Internet Trace Destructor
NEW The Safe: 4 secure disks
Encrypt up to 4.8 GB in one second
NEW Steganos Portable Safe™
Your portable safe on CD, DVD, etc.
Encrypt and hide
Conceal your data in images or music
Now even easier:
Password Manager, E-mail Encryption and Steganos Shredder
gold
BEST BUY
Steganos®
Security Suite 5

KEEPING SNOOPS AWAY FROM SENSITIVE DATA IS EVEN EASIER THANKS TO THE LATEST VERSION OF THIS ACE SECURITY SUITE

In days of yore, most people's idea of securing their personal information was to buy a briefcase with a combination lock on it. And if they didn't want anyone to know where they'd been, they would hide their bus ticket.

While these rather quaint security measures are still performed today, the birth of personal computing and the Internet has led to far more pressing concerns for paranoid members of society. We all have stuff on our hard drive that we don't want anyone else to see; we all use passwords to access our online accounts and bank details; we all send emails that aren't intended for general viewing and we've all been to places on the Net that we wouldn't want others to find out about. Unfortunately all of this information is easy pickings for anyone who wants to come to your PC and poke through it. On top of this, the proliferation of always-on Internet access makes it even easier for hackers, crackers or out-and-out nosey parkers to gain access to someone else's personal data via the Net.

That's the bad news out of the way. The good news is that you don't need to join MI5 to be able to keep your personal information and digital assets safe from prying eyes.



The main interface is so incredibly easy to use that you should be able to pick it up in no time

Good guard

Since setting up just before the Internet exploded into life in the mid-Nineties, Steganos has established itself as one of the most trusted names in online security. With a portfolio that includes programs such as Internet Security, Internet Privacy and Online Shield, the developer makes no bones about what it's all about. Its flagship program, Steganos Security Suite, is currently used by around two million people worldwide to help keep the lid on their sensitive files and information. As software companies have a tendency to do once in a while, Steganos has decided it's time for an update and has served up a fifth helping of the security suite.

When someone mentions 'security software' you probably think of a bloated utility with a maze of different menus and settings to contend with. This is where Steganos Security Suite has always differed and fans of the previous versions will be pleased to hear that the latest offering has retained its incredible ease of use. For anyone unfamiliar with the package, it consists of a suite of seven different security tools such as email and file encryption, trace removal and a password manager, all of which are accessible from one plain interface simply by clicking on the corresponding icon. While all of these tools hang together to form a complete package, they could each conceivably have been sold as separate programs, which means you get great value for money.

Safe as houses

Although Steganos hasn't made wholesale changes to the look and feel of the suite, there are some exciting new additions to behold, most notably the new 'Steganos Safe' tool. This allows you to create a disappearing hard drive that would make Paul Daniels green with envy. You can then lock all your most precious files within this encrypted, password-protected drive so no-one has to know that they're even there.

The process of locking your files in this way is very straightforward and involves nothing more than a couple of clicks. You can create up to four different invisible drives using this feature, and the disappearing act can be performed faster than you can say 'izzy whizzy let's get busy'. In fact, you can encrypt up to 4.8Gb in one second (provided you have the space on your hard drive, of course).

Thankfully Steganos has also addressed the fact that you may, from time to time, wish to ferry your important files around with you without running the risk of them falling into the wrong hands if the combination lock on your briefcase should happen to fail. The Portable Safe function allows you to encrypt your files in a similar manner to the Steganos Safe tool, by creating your own 'portable data safe', which can be burned onto CD or DVD through the program. The step-by-step wizard guides you through the process, so the most taxing thing you need to think about is coming up with a password. You can then transport the disk and decrypt the files on any PC just by entering the password. Steganos claims that the

data can be unscrambled on any machine, and though we were only able to test this boast on a couple of machines, we have no arguments to refute this.

Leave no trace

Perhaps the most popular aspect of the Security Suite is the Internet Trace Destructor, which allows you to switch your Web browsing to stealth mode. The tool will remove shreds of evidence from your computer that could come back to haunt you such as your browser history, cache, recently opened documents, cookies and the contents of your Recycle Bin. There are two different destruction settings to choose from – 'Complete overwrite' and 'Multiple complete overwrite', which complies to US Department of Defense Standards, so you can be extra sure it's been wiped. While the feature supports deletion of temporary Internet files in IE and Netscape, there's no support for removing cache within alternative browsers like Opera or Mozilla, which is a bit of a shame.

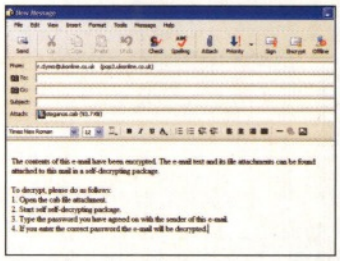
> "EACH TOOL COULD HAVE BEEN SOLD SEPARATELY, SO YOU GET GREAT VALUE FOR MONEY"

Nevertheless we were impressed with the new XP privacy options contained within the Internet Trace tool, which allows you to eliminate some of the more intrusive aspects of the OS by deactivating online registration and update controls, and putting a stop on Windows Media Player data transfers to prevent the boffins at Microsoft peeping at your activities.

Get the message

Another aspect of the Net which always makes people look over their shoulder and break out in a cold sweat is the process of sending email. Most of us are now exercising greater caution in the content of the messages we send to others for fear of being sprung by an inquisitive boss, wife or insurance company.

Security Suite allows you to say or send exactly what you want to anyone you want through its high-speed AES 128-bit email encryption facility. You simply compose a message directly within Steganos, attach any files you wish then choose a password to apply the encryption key. A neat feature here is that as you type the password, you're told what level of encryption is being applied, with more letters →



Encrypted email is nothing more than a mouse click away with Steganos Security Suite 5

Find your way around Steganos Security Suite 5

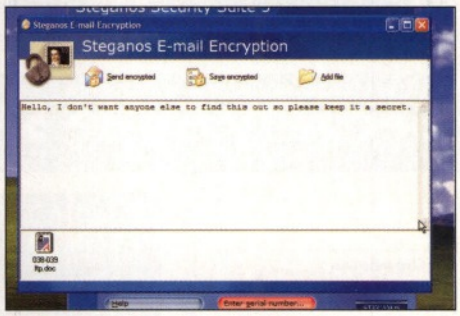
1 Steganos Safe

Steganos Safe is one of the best new additions to the suite, and allows you to lock all your private files out of harm's way. You can create up to four extra secure drives on your hard disk, encrypting up to 4.8Gb of data in just one second.

Steganos Portable Safe
Step 2 of 6
Selecting a folder for package files
Please select the folder for the Portable Safe package files. This folder will contain all files to be copied or burned onto the Portable Safe medium (e.g., the CD-ROM).
This folder can be deleted after the Steganos Portable Safe medium has been created.
Location for Portable Safe package files:
Click 'Next' to continue.
< Back
Next >
Cancel

2 Steganos Portable Safe

If you're on the move a lot then the Portable Safe option might be more your cup of tea. This allows you to burn encrypted files onto a CD or DVD and take this wherever you go. The data can be deciphered on any PC you load the files onto.

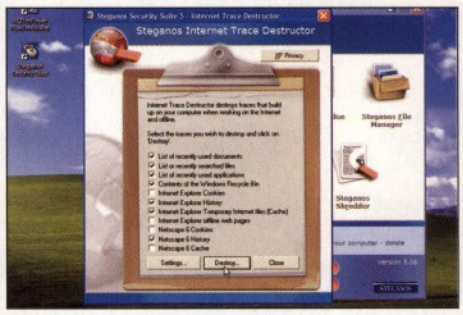


3 Email Encryption

Sending emails containing sensitive information is always a risky business but Steganos ably copes with this, allowing you to send encrypted messages directly from your email client or attach scrambled messages created in Steganos.

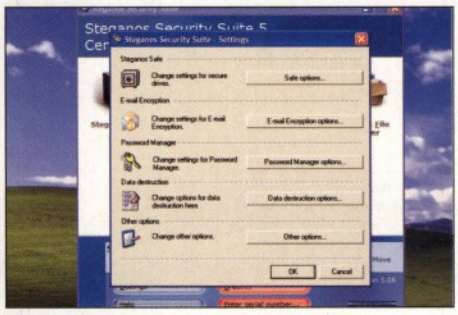
4 Password Manager

The Steganos Password Manager provides the perfect place to store all the passwords you need from Web account details to your PIN number. The program allows you to sort all your private codes into different categories for ease of access.



5 Trace Destructor

Removing all evidence of your online activities is very straightforward thanks to the checklist-style Trace Destructor interface. Here you can wipe away telltale traces such as browser history, cache, and details or recently opened documents.



6 Tweak the settings

While you can access options directly from each different tool with the suite, the 'Settings' button in the main interface gives you control over all aspects of the package – enabling you to configure each section quickly and easily.

Perform tweaks with the 'Settings' section

you use leading to tighter encryption. A couple of letters will result in an email that 'cannot be cracked without specialised software' whereas if you add a few more letters into the password it 'cannot be cracked by the secret services', which makes you feel a little bit like James Bond.

"THIS SECURITY SUITE IS IDEAL FOR BRINGING PIECE OF MIND TO YOUR INTERNET LIFE"

The encrypted message is then sent through your default email client in the normal way. Luckily, if your client isn't compatible with Steganos, you get the option to save the encrypted mail as a file and send it as an attachment from your normal mail program. The message can then only be decoded by the recipient at the other end if they have the password.

Protect your assets

As if all this wasn't enough, Security Suite 5 comes with a number of other useful tools for keeping your digital secrets under wraps. A personal favourite of ours is the Password Manager which provides a secure means of storing the access details for everything from your Webmail account to highly sensitive data such as your bank PIN number (or the combination to your briefcase). Once you've entered the password details and chosen another password to access the passwords with (not as confusing as it sounds) an encryption algorithm is applied and you'll be the only person who can then access these details.

Completing the list of the magnificent utilities that make up the suite are Steganos File Manager and Steganos Shredder, which again represent an easy means of keeping files secure and making sure that they vanish without a trace once you've finished with them.

While it's hard to fault the overall packaging of the tools, there are a few minor aspects of it that get a tad annoying, though this is largely due to the nature of Internet security programs rather than a quirk of Steganos itself. For instance, you're forced to enter the program's serial number every time you access a different utility, which quickly becomes a bit tedious. We also experienced a few problems with the Trace Destructor when deleting items from the cache, which caused it to stall a little at times. Having said this, it isn't a phenomenon that's particular to Security Suite and we've noticed this with other trace removal products over the years.

Overall, the suite's winning combination of simplicity and effective encryption technology makes it ideal for bringing piece of mind to your Net life, leaving you free to worry about the important things in life, like remembering the combination to your briefcase. ■

The verdict

SOFTWARE: Steganos Security Suite 5
PRICE: £39.99 (£29.99 for upgrade)
TEL: 00800 78342667
URL: www.steganos.com

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL **90%**

✔ Provides a very simple means of protecting your data and keeping your online habits to yourself

✖ A few minor snags in the performance of certain features

Security Suite 5 at a glance

Steganos Safe
Keep all your most important files locked away from view by creating an invisible drive on your machine with this new tool
Email Encryption
Steganos utilises the latest AES 128-bit encryption to ensure that your emails are read only by the person they're intended for
Internet Trace Destructor
Here's where you'll find all the juicy tools you need to remove evidence of your online escapades
Settings
This section allows to tweak all the various security options within the suite of utilities
Steganos Security Suite
Steganos Security Suite 5 Center
Steganos Safe
Steganos Portable Safe™
E-mail Encryption
Steganos File Manager
Password Manager
Internet Trace Destructor
Steganos Shredder
Steganos Security Suite
Here in the Steganos Center, you get an overview of all program parts. Move the mouse over the symbols to find out more.
Settings
Help
Order...
Enter serial number...
Version 5.06
STEGANOS
Help
While Security Suite is very straightforward to use, there is a Help section if you're completely stuck
Steganos Shredder
Although you might think you've deleted an item from your hard drive, you can never be sure until you run it through the Steganos Shredder

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AJP 8080 Centrino

IDEAL FOR BUSINESS USE OR THOSE LOOKING FOR A PORTABLE COMPUTER, NOTEBOOKS BASED AROUND INTEL'S CENTRINO ARE COMING ONTO THE MARKET AND THIS ATTRACTIVE MODEL IS AMONG THE FIRST

When we first took the 8080 out of its box we thought there had been a bit of a mix-up. Instead of a standard black or grey notebook it looked like we had been sent one of Apple's slinky iBook computers. The AJP logo on top quickly dismissed that idea, though, and we realised we had in our possession one of the most attractive PC laptops around. Its clear plastic casing and white border are noticeably different from any other notebook and we have no doubt the 8080 will result in many envious glances wherever you take it.

What is Centrino?

Unlike the name 'Pentium', Centrino actually refers to more than a single product line. It is Intel's term for a new mobile computing technology that combines integrated wireless communication into a package that is smaller and more energy efficient. In basic terms, that means you get slim, sexy notebook PCs with the latest communication hardware built in, and a much greater battery life. But in order to fit the necessary components into a smaller space and reduce battery consumption, they have sacrificed performance. Currently, the maximum speed of a Centrino notebook is 1.6GHz compared to the 2-2.4GHz speed of standard portable PCs in the same price range. And although they may include Wi-Fi and USB2 support, there is little room for expansion, meaning those of you looking for a desktop replacement that can be easily stored away are going to be better off elsewhere.

Despite this, the drawbacks of the Centrino design, while troubling for some, are unlikely to be of concern to those they are aimed at. For business users or students a Centrino laptop is ideal. It's easier to carry around and although not hugely powerful is more than capable of running Windows XP, word processing and a multitude of other common tasks.

Practical Internet RECOMMENDED

Tech specs

AJP has the full range of Centrino models on offer, from 1.3GHz to 1.6GHz, but our review model featured a mid-range 1.4GHz 'pentium' M CPU. Apart from the slower-than-normal processor, the rest of the specification is average, which on something this size is an impressive feat. There's 256Mb DDR-RAM with a maximum capacity of 1Gb, a 40Gb HDD which can be expanded up to 80Gb, 14.1" colour monitor and a DVD/CD-RW combination drive. Being the next-generation of portable computing, we expected to see plenty of connectivity options and the 8080 certainly did not disappoint. In addition to the aforementioned wireless capability you've also got three USB2 ports, an IEEE 1394 firewire connection, TV-out, headphone socket and a very useful smart card slot that can handle most types of digital camera memory cards. It's worth noting too that the DVD/CD-RW combo drive can be removed and replaced with a DVD writer or second HDD, and if you plan on using floppy disks you will need to purchase an external USB floppy drive, supplied by AJP of course.

Able performer

Despite only having a mobile 'pentium' 4 processor, you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference between this and the latest 3GHz desktop model during normal usage. Because of the networking features, Windows XP Professional is a standard installation, and the 8080 handles it admirably well. Microsoft Office runs without any problems and browsing the Web is a trouble-free experience. As with many laptops however, the graphics chipset is only a basic onboard option. It isn't capable of any more than the most rudimentary 3D effects so you won't be able to play many games on it, and it will also struggle to handle advanced graphical editing tasks. Despite this, it doesn't have the slightest bit of difficulty with a Windows desktop and the output is crisp and clear, helped largely by the high quality monitor.

Overall we had no major problems with the way the AJP 8080 operates. It's a lightweight, easily portable laptop with plenty of extra features and reasonably powerful specification. Our only reservations lie with the Centrino design itself – as the comparatively low speed of the processor means that it gives the laptop a shorter life than most of its rivals.

You can't ignore the benefits however, and anybody looking for a truly portable PC will be very happy with what the AJP 8080 has to offer. ■

The verdict

HARDWARE: AJP 8080 Centrino
PRICE: £1144.45
TEL: 020 8208 9744
URL: www.ajp.co.uk

FEATURES:	★★★★★	**OVERALL**
EASE OF USE:	★★★★★	**87%**
VALUE:	★★★★★	

✔ Small, quiet and good-looking. Surprisingly powerful specification

✖ Its usefulness will depend on your requirements

ACD PhotoMaster Suite

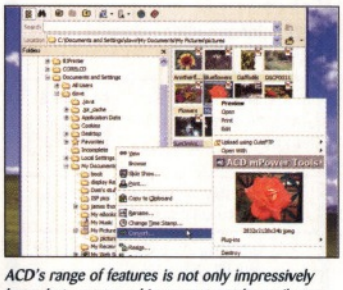
Practical internet RECOMMENDED

ARE YOUR DIGITAL PHOTOS IN A MESS? THIS THREE-IN-ONE SUITE FROM ACD COULD HELP YOU WHIP THEM INTO SHAPE IN NO TIME

When digital imaging first sprang up a few years back, many thought it spelt the end of days spent endlessly arranging holiday snaps into photo albums or wasting hours turning the house upside-down looking for a dog-eared old school photo.

However, these people hadn't banked on the fact that once your hard drive gets filled up with countless random snaps, it becomes virtually impossible to track down individual images. What's more, people's initial visions of pristine, immaculate digital photographs were soon shattered when they realised that the age-old problems of red-eye, chopped-off heads and under-exposed images would come back to haunt them.

If you've got yourself into a bit of a pickle with your images and are starting to wonder why you even bought that scanner or digicam in the first place, this new suite from ACD might renew your interest in the digital age. The suite of utilities consists of a tool for viewing, searching and organising your images, a reasonably powerful image editor and a photo-printing application.



ACD's range of features is not only impressively large, but you can achieve great results easily too

Get sorted

Perhaps the most novel element of the program is its mPower Tools utility, which is designed to help you find, view and organise your photos with ease. Unlike similar recent releases such as Photoshop Album and Paint Shop Pro Photo Album, ACD's application integrates exceptionally well with Windows Explorer, providing a familiar interface in which you can browse the folders of your hard drive for images and graphics, which are previewed in thumbnail format on the screen.

By right-clicking on a thumbnail you can call up a mighty range of options relating to the image such as format conversion, resizing, rotating or changing the brightness of the image, which is ideal for making instant alterations on the fly. You also get the opportunity to alter the meta data contained within an image, allowing you to add descriptions, notes, change the author, etc. This data can then be used to pinpoint items using the mPower Tools Find tool, allowing you to track down every image on your hard drive that relates to a particular subject or which has been taken by a particular person.

Paint it black

The handy dockable Media Bar allows you to access and browse all your images in mPower Tools, and you can then simply drag them into your image editor for instant access. PhotoMaster suite comes with its own editor in the shape of Corel Photo-Paint, a worthy adversary to the likes of Paint Shop Pro and Photoshop Elements.

The application gives you a range of controls over your images, allowing you to perform everything from simple fixes such as correcting red-eye, scratches and light levels to advanced tools like layers, lenses, effects and professional colour modes. While the package takes a little getting used to, it can take on pretty much anything that PSP and Photoshop Elements can handle, which isn't bad when you consider it's costing you a fraction of the price.

The third, and probably the least useful, member of the three amigos that make up PhotoMaster Suite is ACD FotoSlate 2.0, a printing studio which allows you to mastermind the publishing of your pictures. There are 450 different layout templates to choose from – or you can create your own, making it pretty useful if you're performing print jobs on a regular basis.

When all is said and done, though, there's nothing new or revolutionary contained within PhotoMaster Suite and there aren't many features that'll make your hair stand on end. Considering its low price point, however, it represents a remarkably effective means of organising, editing and printing your images without forking out for three separate programs. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: ACD PhotoMaster Suite
PRICE: £69.95
TEL: 800 289041
URL: www.guildsoft.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★☆
VALUE: ★★★★★
OVERALL 85%

✔ Represents a cheap way of whipping your digital images into shape

✘ Nothing hugely original about it

Ricoh Caplio G3

WITH ITS LIGHTNING SHUTTER RESPONSE SPEED, THIS DIGICAM COULD BE IDEAL FOR THOSE TROUBLESOME ACTION SHOTS

Practical internet RECOMMENDED

While digital cameras are revolutionising the way we capture and share treasured moments, there are a few aspects of digital technology that don't quite match up to the good-old-fashioned 35mm.

One of the few universal grumbles muttered by digicam owners relates to the speed of their shutters. While SLR cameras can rattle off shots almost the instant the shutter release is pressed, digital photographers must wait a few seconds before the picture is taken. By this time, that shy lesser-spotted crested grebe has probably already flown out of shot.

The times they are a-changing though, and Ricoh has scored a victory for digital lovers everywhere with the introduction of the Caplio G3 which promises to do what no digicam has done before – exceed the shutter speed of a conventional SLR camera. The camera is pretty true to its word, and the 0.14 second shutter response time puts it on an even footing with most 35mm snappers, though we're sceptical over whether or not it's actually faster than these.

Who's zooming in on who?

But don't let the quick shooting prowess of Ricoh's new baby make you think that this is a one-trick pony. The G3 boasts a 3.2 megapixel CCD with a high performance 3x optical lens and a 3.4x digital zoom for getting up close and personal with your subjects. There's also a decent macro facility which works as close as 1cm from your subject, making for some unique shots.

However, it's definitely action shots where the Caplio comes into its own. In addition to its super-quick shutter release speed, the camera also comes with a nippy 'M-continuous' mode, allowing you to reel off the last 16 frames of a subject to one file. This is perfect for honing your golf swing or capturing a wonder goal in a football match. There are also six different preset 'Scene modes', allowing you to instantly set up the device to take pictures in certain conditions such as portrait shots, landscapes or night shots. This is ideal for newcomers to photography who want to get decent results without too much fiddling around.

Like many of the top digicams around today, the G3 comes with a movie-recording facility allowing you to capture and store up to 120 seconds of action on the device. Unlike most of the other offerings out there, the Caplio also records sound, and has its own internal speaker for reliving those hilarious jokes time and time again. Playing back video is like reviewing pictures – very straightforward – and the menu system on the camera's LCD screen is pretty intuitive.

Transfer talk

Transferring shots from the Caplio to your hard drive is also a doddle, thanks to the inclusion of Ricoh's own imaging software, compatible with both PC and Mac. In fact, after installing the software and rigging the camera to your machine via the supplied USB cable, importing will begin automatically, at speeds up to a mightily impressive 3Mb per second. The camera boasts 8Mb of internal memory, though in all likelihood this won't be enough for your needs and you'll want to shove a secure digital memory card into the G3 for some extra storage.

While we were hugely impressed with the speed and performance of the Caplio G3, it didn't really tickle our fancy in the looks department. Its basic styling is finished off in plastic rather than metal, and we noticed that the chrome-coloured coating on the unit we tested began to chip off after only a few days' use. As a result, we reckon that if the camera were a human, it would probably be described as having a 'nice personality'. ■

The macro feature in the G3 lets you get up close and personal with even the most purple of flowers – and you needn't worry about the colours being reproduced incorrectly either

The verdict

SOFTWARE: Ricoh Caplio G3
PRICE: £219.99
TEL: 0208 261 4031
URL: www.ricoh.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE: ★★★★☆
VALUE: ★★★★☆
OVERALL 80%

✔ Arguably the fastest shutter speed in the digital camera world

✖ Looks like it's had a bit of a scuffle with the ugly stick

WIN £1000

From June 1st to July the Biggest £30 Free Winner can win up to £1000

SUNNY
PROGRESSIVE
£377,516.73
AND CLIMBING

Sunny Casinos

CA$INO Fortune

AuctionEasy 2.1

WHIP VISITORS INTO A BIDDING FRENZY AND GET EBAY QUAKING WITH THE LATEST IN AUCTION ROOM AUTHORING SOFTWARE

There was a time when frequenting stale and stuffy auction houses or flea markets was strictly reserved for manor house toffs and TV's 'Lovejoy'. These days, thanks to a certain daytime Mr Dickinson and the success of new age equivalents such as eBay, bargain hunting is positively de rigueur. If you're an organisation that fancies embracing this boom to sell items online, this product's for you. AuctionEasy 2.1 is essentially a total business solution for anyone hoping to add auction facilities to their site. This could feasibly range from commercial Web retailers, fundraising committees or anyone looking to make commission on flogging other people's gear. The package will happily stand alone or integrate into your existing pages to seamlessly maintain design continuity.

Going once...

If you're familiar with sites such as eBay you'll immediately feel at home with AuctionEasy's interface. It's all been designed to get customers registered, signed in and searching for their coveted items quickly and simply. It follows the same principles as its contemporaries, with items archived categorically or via the supplied search engine. Terapin insists that the product is fully automated if necessary and that technical supervision is not required after setup. What's nice here is that two admin modes are provided to allow filtering between purely business and public access.

The general look can also be tailored by adding personal logos or changing templates, while more specific requests can be made to the developer. Online payments can also be accepted by subscribing to an

Internet Merchant Account, with Secure Socket Layer (SSL) support an optional extra. This is where the whole package can become quite expensive, considering the further cost if your site needs hosting. In fairness, the figures do become more palatable when you remember the revenue power of what you're buying, should the offer of a free domain name not wash.

In short, AuctionEasy is a really good idea, and as a complete e-auction house or shop front it fits the bill very well. All the necessary features are present and correct, with any misgivings about limited styling options and steep pricing quickly tempered by the money-making possibilities. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: AuctionEasy 2.1
PRICE: £382 + £293.75 per year hosting
TEL: 01273 688338
URL: www.auctioneasy.co.uk

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★½☆
OVERALL 84%

✔ A great off-the-shelf auction site. Extremely powerful and ready to go with little fuss

✘ The highly specialised application and heavy price tag may deter

Microsoft Wireless Optical Desktop Pro

UNCHAIN YOURSELF FROM THE OFFICE SEAT AND DETACH FROM THE DESKTOP BY EXPERIENCING THIS FUNKY OPTICAL PERIPHERAL

If you believe the industry hype, wireless is the buzzword of the moment. In truth, PC manufacturers have flirted with it for a while, but the desire to have more compatible and mobile devices still burns. In fact it doesn't even stop at the trusty desktop (MDF variety) where standard PC devices are expressing a desire to go AWOL. Microsoft's new Wireless Optical Desktop Pro is the latest in a range of devices that promise a full repertoire of button and mouse tricks. As a bundle it appears very attractive, with both the optical pointer and ergonomic, multimedia keyboard rendered in sleek silver and black. There was certainly no shame in setting them up in the *PI* offices. Microsoft must see this product as part of a big multimedia picture, as it seems to fit interactive entertainment purposes.

All keyed up

Connecting the pair up is easy, with the receiver pod connectable to standard ps/2 ports or a single USB. The software should be installed first however, but the quick step-by-step procedure is no hassle. Potential setup worries are really only attributed to the necessary clearance you need to give the receiver (interference) and the use of batteries. Both mouse and keyboard require two AA type, and the wonder is how long these can last. In terms of use, the mouse has a reassuring weight to it with a nice gliding action and smooth wheel. The finish on these products is of a quality you'd expect, and the responsiveness is excellent. Microsoft has made sure the keyboard is most effective with its own software, and there are plenty of factory-set hotkeys for launching popular apps. Most are customisable and the top panel of multimedia buttons for Net, mail and music is highly useful. A downside is that the split key configuration and integrated wrist rest makes the device slightly clumsy for roaming. The range is said to be good for six feet. ■

The verdict

PRODUCT: Microsoft Wireless Optical Desktop Pro
PRICE: around £72
TEL: N/A
URL: www.microsoft.com/keyboard

FEATURES: ★★★★★
EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
VALUE: ★★★½☆
OVERALL 84%

✔ Nicely styled and well-built devices that cannot fail to drag your desktop into the future

✘ Keyboard is pretty hefty and the wireless functionality could prove an expensive novelty

VIRUSES

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE...
EVERYBODY HATES THEM...
HOW THE HELL DO YOU GET RID OF THEM?

We give you the complete lowdown on beating viruses, and demonstrate the methods you need to use to ensure you don't get caught out ever again

CHECK OUT NEXT MONTH'S
VIRUS-BUSTING PRACTICAL INTERNET
ON SALE 24 JULY 2003

CD contents

Welcome...

THEY SAY IT'S all in the ingredients, and just as a baker can't rustle up a fruit cake without a bit of sugar, flour and dried fruit, even the best Web designer will never get very far without certain vital page elements.

The recipe for a good Web site includes a mixture of top class images, scripts, fonts and backgrounds. This month we serve up all the ingredients you'll need to whip up a site that will make a real impact online. Our bumper collection of over 6,000 Web page resources allows you to ply your site with the elements that will help it stand out from the crowd.

Of course, how you use these resources is up to you, but once you've found the right blend why not write to us and we'll give you our verdict on your concoction.

Lee Cornish, Multimedia Editor
lee@paragon.co.uk

How to use the disc

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16-bit colour, Windows 95/98/Me, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the 'Start' menu, select 'RUN' and then type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs
We will be pleased to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs
If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, along with your full postal address and daytime phone number.

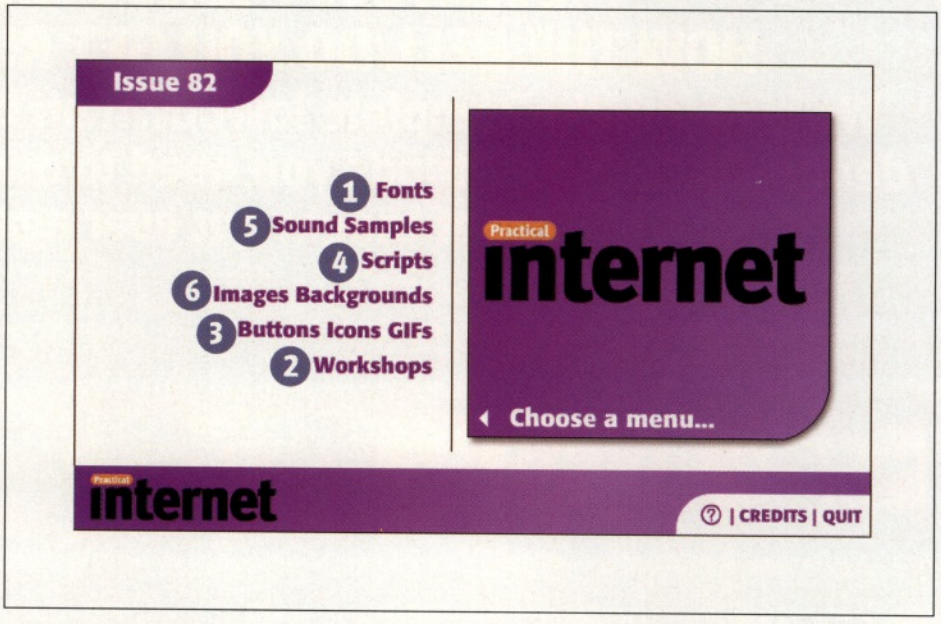
Problems using the disc
If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily. Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email. Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone **01202 200259**.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 Operating Systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

On the CD this month...



1 FONTS

Larabie Fonts (343)
Nick's Fonts (11)
Pizzadude Fonts (240)

Feast your eyes on our mammoth collection of over 500 fonts. Take your pick from our impressive range of typefaces.

3 BUTTONS, ICONS & GIFS

Animation Factory (300)
Flaming Pear (87)
Royalty Free Art Buttons (265)
Royalty Free Art Favicons (142)
Web Graphics (976)

You want buttons to style up your site? You want animated GIFs that are actually worth using? Well, you've come to the right place, for we've acquired well over a thousand Web graphics that will improve any site. With 300 top quality animated GIFs, over 100 icons for you to use in whatever way you want, and hundreds of buttons, you really can't go wrong.

2 WORKSHOPS

Dreamweaver MX
Flash MX
Flash workshop files
JavaScript workshop files
Morpheus 3.0
Photoshop 7.0
PHP workshop files

We barely had room for any software this month, but we made sure that you still had the programs and files you need to follow our workshops. We recommend you pay particular attention to the excellent Flash files, which will set you on your way to building a Space Invaders game – turn to page 54 for more information, and you'll be playing in no time.

4 SCRIPTS

CodeBrain (17)
PokW (4)
Scriptles (25)

Everybody needs code for their site, but few of us are any good at scripting. To compensate for this, we're giving you 46 of the best scripts we could find, which will let you apply all manner of effects to your site, without you having to touch a line of code.

5 SOUND SAMPLES

eJay (501)
Peace Love Productions (60)

Years ago, we eschewed sonic Web sites, but Flash and broadband mean that it's now cool to power up your site with sounds. You'll find 561 cool loops, samples and sounds here.

6 IMAGES AND BACKGROUNDS

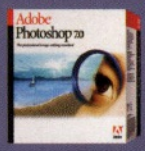
Budget Stock Photo Samples (38)
Flaming Pear (13)
Royalty Free Art Backgrounds (263)
Web graphics (2,947)

Talk to anyone, and they'll tell you that the most important part of Web design is the images you use. Even if you hardly have any pics on your site, people will still remember you for them – so if they're rubbish, your visitors will remember never to come back again. With this in mind, we've scoured the Net for some high quality images you can use with confidence. The 38 Stock Photo samples are of the highest quality – most of the JPEGs here check in at a beefy 500Kb or more. If this doesn't tickle your fancy, why not take a gander at our massive 3,000 free Web graphics? You'll find a host of images here, from stunning space and animal photos through to whimsical cartoons – and with so many to choose from, you're bound to find just what you want.

Try these

Flash MX, Trial
Macromedia's much-worshipped graphics package gives you the power to unleash your creativity on the Web. We show you how to create a stunning Space Invaders game on page 54.

Photoshop 7.0, Trial
The biggest and best for some time now, Photoshop 7.0 promises to give you the full gamut of image-editing features. Check out our tips on getting more from Photoshop on page 52.



Dreamweaver MX, trial
Firmly established as the weapon of choice for most serious Web designers, Dreamweaver marries superb functionality with ease of use.

Images and Web page backgrounds

LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION ON HOW TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR SITE? WELL, LOOK NO FURTHER, FOR WE HAVE OVER 3,000 IMAGES TO HELP TRANSFORM YOUR PAGES

Budget Stock Photo Samples

www.budgetstockphoto.com

Let's face it, text-only Web sites are about as dull as you can get, so it's always worth sprinkling your pages with a few choice images to catch the eye of your visitors. Budget Stock Photo prides itself on being one of the most cost-effective digital image solutions in the UK and boasts a wide selection of good quality, royalty-free photographs, which can be used to add some sparkle to your site. We've stuffed 38 high resolution pictures from Budget Stock Photo on this month's CD which can be used to illustrate certain sections of your site, such as credit cards for a payment section or a padlock to show that your site is secure.

Royalty Free Art Backgrounds

www.royaltyfreeart.com

Why pay over the odds for the right to use high quality pictures on your Web site, when you can achieve the same effect without so much as looking at your wallet? The collection of backgrounds from Royalty Free Art on this month's cover CD allows you to apply a gorgeous backdrop to your site without forking out on expensive images. The templates included in this collection consist of a piece of artwork on the left plus a coloured background to insert behind your page. There are a stonking 263 backgrounds to choose from which range from pictures of the Mona Lisa to psychedelic patterns to liven up your pages.

Flaming Pear

www.flamingpear.com

Quite what a smouldering fruit has to do with digital images we don't know, but nevertheless Flaming Pear certainly knows what it's doing when it comes to Web design. The developer, which specialises in Photoshop plug-ins, has produced a stylish range of 13 different Web backgrounds, which you can use to give your pages instant impact. Each of the patterns can be used to convey a different mood or theme, so your site's visitors instantly get an idea of what you're all about. What's more, these backgrounds are as cool as you'd expect from one of the best graphics experts on the Web.

Web graphics

Kind of the Internet version of Carol Smilie telling you how to do up your home on the cheap, this mammoth collection of graphics contains everything you need to give your site the ultimate graphical makeover. With 2,947 images in total, the collection of free graphics is split into four main categories: Backgrounds, Illustrations, Lineart and Photos. Each of these categories is then broken down into further sub-categories. For instance, within the Photos section, you'll discover a diverse range of subject matter including animals, space, sport and plants. Our particular favourite is this leaping tiger, which you'll find in the 'Animals' section. In fact, if you can't find an image among this monster selection to suit your needs, then we reckon you'll never get one.

Samples

eJay

www.ejay.com

eJay has developed a reputation as something of an innovator in the world of digital music creation, empowering a generation of armchair DJs to fulfil their mixing dreams from the comfort of their own home. Through its range of programs like Dance, Techno and Hip Hop eJay, users can quickly fuse samples together without even going near a set of turntables, making it a cheap and easy way of conjuring up floor-filling grooves. What's less well-known is the fact that eJay offers up a mighty collection of downloadable samples on its Web site, which you can pick up for nothing. We've included 501 of our favourite loops from the site on the disc, but you can get hold of even more by entering the Free Sounds section of the site.

Peace Love Productions

www.peaceloveproductions.com

Sounding like a film company set up by a couple of hippies, Peace Love Productions is actually a rather groovy music firm that provides a bumper collection of samples. The company's debut release, Digital Dance Tools, went on to become Sonic Foundry's DDT Designer dance tools CD. The company has since released 16 CDs' worth of banging samples and loops, which have put them at the cutting edge of electronic club music. We've included 60 loops courtesy of Peace Love Productions this month, which you can use to create the perfect soundtrack to your Web site. If you're thirsty for more then why not check out the PLP site and get yourself one of the CDs?

Buttons, icons and GIFs

SPRUCE UP YOUR SITE A TREAT, AND GIVE IT A COHERENT AND CONSISTENT STYLE TO BOOT WITH THIS GREAT COLLECTION OF IMAGES, BUTTONS AND ICONS THAT YOU CAN USE AS THE BASIS FOR YOUR PAGES

Royalty Free Art

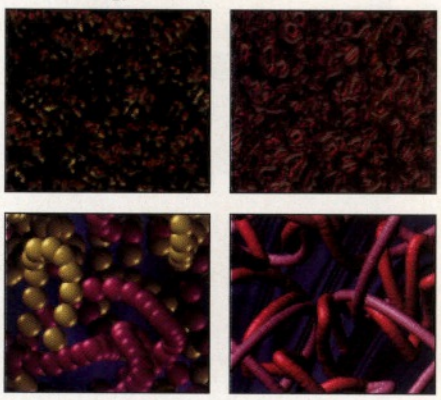
www.royaltyfreeart.com

If you're after something a bit more classy for your site, perhaps in an Impressionist, Renaissance or pre-Raphaelite style, then Royalty Free Art is for you. There's nothing like adding a touch of fine art to your lecture presentations or home pages, and this site allows you to do just that. Designed and maintained by graphics publisher Eve Paludan, the site is regularly updated with images retrieved from antique books and various ephemera.

We're giving away a bundle of the stuff: and you can access the 265 buttons for Web design through the themed sections, along with a set of 142 'Favicons'. These tiny images can be applied to your site so that whoever bookmarks it gets a stylish icon added to their Favorites. Royalty Free Art also offers some stunning examples of work from famous artists that could similarly be used to make prints. There's also a shop, but we reckon that you'll be more than happy with the 400-odd icons and images we've given you here.

Flaming Pear

www.flamingpear.com



Sounding not unlike what someone might shout after dropping a large item of fruit on their foot, this site is a graphic artist's dream. It offers a whole plethora of downloadable tools for digital image work, focusing heavily on photo effects and filters. Providing plug-ins for both Photoshop and Paint Shop Pro is what Flaming Pear is famed for, and the samples on the site are sure to impress. These software patches can simply be added to your chosen package and used as an integrated tool. But that's not all – on the CD you'll find 87 superb icons that are featured on the site, so take a look. Each of these can be used for a variety of purposes, although we'd suggest banging them on your Web buttons for the coolest Web pages around – alternatively, use them as Favicons to give your visitors a more interactive bookmarking experience.

Web Graphics

This massive array of graphics may well be free, but you can be sure they're good quality. There are 976 items included here, ranging from a set of alphabet GIFs to highly versatile 3D button templates. What's nice about this collection is the variety of applications they could be used for. Of course the animated and static icons, along with a set of graphical bars, may find themselves most suited to the Web – but that's not all. We've also thrown in some excellent Windows-esque toolbar buttons that developers of all types will love. Their functional forms will make them perfect for integration into Visual Basic interfaces and the like. Similarly, you may find that documents, letters or presentations will benefit from a little illustration. So whatever the occasion, we guarantee that you'll find something to spruce up your designs within this immense collection.

Animation Factory

www.animationfactory.com

Animation Factory claims to be 'the largest original clip art gallery on the Web', and after seeing the site it's hard to disagree. An incredible archive of graphics awaits anyone looking to add some attractive artwork to their creations. If you want to enliven your HTML with sprightly GIFS, backgrounds and buttons, look no further. There are some really useful PowerPoint templates to be had too, with some great hi-res photo images for sprucing up your documents. What's more, finding just what you need is dead easy via a simple cataloguing system. Search the site for that elusive pic or just browse the many categories and tabbed sections. There are plenty of free samples on offer and we've managed to procure 300 of them to get you started. However, by registering with the site you'll gain access to loads of brilliant membership services, including a whopping gallery CD absolutely free!

So just remember, whatever you're doing isn't complete until it features an animated animal doing a wacky dance.

Fonts

FONTS ARE THE EASIEST WAY TO MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE TO YOUR LOGO DESIGNS – AND WE'VE GOT OVER 500 OF THEM ON OUR CORKING CD

Larabie's Fonts

www.larabiefonts.com

Although most people seem to think Times New Roman is the only choice, the fact is you can never have too many fonts. It's just as well then that Art Director Ray Larabie has decided to devote his life to designing funky typefaces. Larabiefonts.com has seen many incarnations since its inception in 1996 but its new look perfectly showcases the latest in lettering. Catalogued alphabetically by their often odd names, the fonts are available for download and commercial use with Mac or Windows. Split into two (Regular and Deluxe) sections, we reckon there's probably a style to meet anyone's tastes. It's also possible to contact Ray himself and request to buy custom fonts, although asking for a set that's based on your handwriting is apparently not appreciated.

To give you an idea of just how good Larabie's fonts are, we've wrapped up 343 onto the CD. That should be more than enough for the time being, but should you desire the latest 'Anklepants' you'll know where to go.

Pizzadude

www.pizzadude.dk

Perhaps taking the award for most irrelevant URL on the Web, Pizzadude actually offers fonts... just fonts – although the site is a real attention grabber with its vibrant colours, cheeky artwork and fun design. Offering 'a slice of great fonts' this is probably the closest thing to fast-food typefaces, with a capable selection of share and freeware sets. What is really great about this place is that fonts are not just blandly displayed, but incorporated into cute slideshows. As you read blurb telling you just how much you need a slimy-looking font, you suddenly realise you're looking at it. A neat little toolbar with funny icons then allows navigation through the collection, or downloading for Windows and Mac. Even if you don't want anything, it's a triumph for nice design, so feel free to have a visit.

In the meantime we've secured a massive 240 fonts for you to play around with, so there's no more excuses for having boring logos and sites.

Nick's Fonts

www.nicksfonts.com

Not surprisingly, nicksfonts.com is a site created by a bloke called Nick with some fonts on it. Again this is an attractive, fresh and no-nonsense site that provides access to original freeware and commercial character sets. After agreeing to accept a few rules about not mucking about with what's available, you can download a whole host of snazzy lettering for Mac and PC. Grouped by name, the styles range from the more cartoony scripts to a distinct art deco flavour. If you're still not satisfied, the site also allows you to purchase more, and a PDF catalogue is available for previewing. Nick's been kind enough to give us 11 fonts for the CD, with one that normally retails for £15. This is professional quality stuff so if you enjoy what you've seen, take a trip to nicksfonts.com for even more.

Scripts

Scriptles

scriptles.bluwall.com

Scriptles is a focal point for those people who wish to develop code for their HTML pages. It makes no bones about its lack of technical advice, but prefers to promote actual solutions to coding headaches. This basically means that if you want to include calendar programs or drop-down menus on your site, you can download them here. With scripts available in JavaScript and Perl, the site also offers a useful Scriptles text editor for doing some DIY programming. Of particular note are the applets for creating flashy rollover images and menus. An online stock ordering system is also included for quick and effective integration. On the CD you'll find 25 scripts that you're free to use as you wish – so what are you waiting for?

CodeBrain

www.codebrain.com

For a Web-programming resource with a glowing reputation among its users, look no further than CodeBrain. Its dark and neon interface has a real techie vibe and the content doesn't disappoint, with stacks of stuff available. Although heavily geared towards JavaScript enthusiasts, the site also offers considerable Perl support. Intended for use among industry pros and amateurs alike, the various applets on offer can be neatly previewed within a slideshow. With a heavy imaging bias, CodeBrain is renowned for its hugely popular 'Slider' applet that has drawn record downloads. There are a total of 17 scripts included on the disc, covering a whole host of applications. We're sure you'll find they represent some of the most innovative widgets about.

PokW

www.pokw.com

PokW is a site created by hobbyist coder Pok-Ching Lee to distribute his hard work. All the original JavaScripts can be downloaded for free, and easily cut and pasted into your Web pages. On the CD you'll find four scripts that include a memory game, sliding puzzler and a multiplayer word wheel applet.

Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering Internet service providers and the very best Net software and hardware. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops encourage you to spend a little more on buying higher spec products than you really need.

This is why *Practical Internet*'s Buyers' Guide is so useful. It's been written with everyday Net users like you in mind and only includes the products and services which we think are genuinely worth buying.

Buy with confidence

The information here is updated every month, but please note that prices and features do sometimes change before we can amend them on these pages – so it's best to check with the supplier before buying.

Look out for our cherished Star Buy logo (below) which is only awarded to the best quality products around.

Practical internet ★★ STAR BUY ★★

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

BROADBAND: ADSL

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
0800 Dial ADSL	www.0800dial.com	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home 500 Self Install 20:1	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£59.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Home Single User 500 USB	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£34.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office 1000 Self Install	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£94.99	£35.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 1000	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£99.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
ABC Net ADSL Office Multi User 500	www.abcnet.co.uk/	£69.99	£250.00	0	0	NK
Abel Always Routed1000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£109.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed2000	www.abelalways.co.uk	£135.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always Routed500	www.abelalways.co.uk	£75.00	£130.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
Abel Always USB	www.abelalways.co.uk	£25.50	£210.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
ADSL NOW! 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£139.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL NOW! 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£92.77	N/A	0	0	No
ADSL4Home! (Self-Install)	www.adsl-now.co.uk	£29.32	£58.69	0	0	No
Albion.net ADSL 1000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£109.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 2000 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£139.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 LAN	www.albion.co.uk	£79.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Albion.net ADSL 500 Single	www.albion.co.uk	£39.00	N/A	Unlimited	10	Yes
Allcomm Home 500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£25.00	£150.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S1000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£120.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S2000	www.allcomm.co.uk	£150.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Allcomm S500	www.allcomm.co.uk	£85.00	£286.00	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold Home 500	www.aa.nu	£58.75	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Home 500 Lite (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£29.95	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Andrews & Arnold Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.aa.nu	£75.00	£99.88	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
AOL Broadband (Self Install)	www.aol.co.uk	£27.99	£85.00	7	14	Yes
applica Connect1000	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£99.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica Connect500	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£65.00	£25.00	50	0	NK
applica ConnectSolo	www.applicabroadband.co.uk	£26.99	£25.00	50	0	NK
Aviators ADSL Home 500	www.aviators.net	£29.00	£199.00	0	0	NK
BISCIT EUSB 500 (Engineer Installed)	www.biscit.com	£23.95	£210.00	0	20	NK

Quick steps to picking your ideal Internet service provider

1 What kind of broadband?

ADSL is currently the fastest-growing connection type in the UK. It relies on you shelling out for BT to 'activate' your line, then paying a monthly subscription. Expect download speeds of up to 60Kb a second with an ADSL line.

CABLE services have been around for longer, and utilise the same kind of technology that powers cable TV into many people's homes. If you live in a cable-enabled area, then you can get anything up to 120Kb a second.

SATELLITE presents the only viable broadband option for people who can't get either ADSL or cable. Costs are high, though, and setting up tends to be very complicated.

2 Can you get it?

Many people can't get ADSL or cable access because it is unavailable in their area. If this is you, take a look at our rundown of unmetered and pay-as-you-go services.

3 Getting speedy help

Worried you'll need your ISP's technical help a lot? Use our guide to find yourself an inexpensive support line.

4 Are you a Quake king?

Net gaming is coming back into the limelight with the increasing popularity of broadband. Most broadband ISPs allow you to game on their time, but check their Web site first to make sure.

5 Building a Web site?

The days when you got a free domain name with every account you set up are long gone, but you can still get your hands on masses of Web space for nothing. Check that your potential provider is generous with free Web space – although 10Mb will be more than enough for most people.

6 Check the mail

Virtually every ISP will offer you at least one POP3 email account when you sign up, but it's worth checking out the small print, especially with new 'no-frills' ADSL services which are designed to give you a basic connection and not much more.

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ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
BISCIT Home USB 500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£23.40	£15.00	0	20	NK
BISCIT OFFICE S1000 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£99.95	£28.00	0	50	NK
BISCIT USB S500 (Self-Install)	www.biscit.com	£74.95	£25.00	0	50	Yes
Boltblue Broadband (Self-Install)	www.boltblue.com	£27.99	N/A	5	15	Yes
Breathepro ADSL Connect (Self Install)	www.breathe.com	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
BT Broadband	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£27.00	£30.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business1000PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£119.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	£210.00	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld business500PLUS	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£79.99	N/A	10	20	Yes
BTopenworld Home Plug & Go - Line Only (Self-install)	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld home500	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	£250.00	10	50	Yes
BTopenworld Home 500 Plug & Go (Self-Install)	www.btopenworld.com/	£29.99	N/A	10	50	Yes
Business Serve 1000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£87.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 2000 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£107.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve 500 Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£67.95	£60.00	0	0	No
Business Serve SOHO Wires Only	www.businessserve.co.uk	£29.32	£60.00	0	0	No
CharityDAYS Donate ADSL Home	www.charitydays.net	£30.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Eclipse ADSL Connect 500lite (Self-Install)	www.eclipse.net.uk	£22.75	£25.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
edNET Multi User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£99.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 2000	www.ednet.co.uk	£129.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Multi User 1000	www.ednet.co.uk	£199.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
edNET Single User 500	www.ednet.co.uk	£29.95	£25.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
fairADSL (Self-Install)	www.fairadsl.co.uk	£18.99	£33.00	1	0	Yes
Firenet Speedwire 500	www.firenet.uk.net	£26.50	£75.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Firstnet Single User	www.firstnet.net.uk	£75.00	£65.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
Force9 ADSL 500	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Home - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£22.99	£41.13	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart	www.force9.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Force9 ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.force9.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL 500	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£305.50	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart	www.free-online.co.uk	£47.00	£176.25	Unlimited	500	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£35.24	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.free-online.co.uk	£64.63	£58.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 1000 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£95.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freedom2Surf Pure IP 500 (Self-Install)	www.freedom2surf.net	£60.00	£29.99	20	20	Yes
Freeserve Broadband (Self-Install)	www.freeserve.com	£27.99	£84.99	Unlimited	150	Yes
Gconnect Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£110.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£140.00	£30.00	1	20	NK
Gconnect Business 500 Single User (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£29.99	£30	1	20	NK
Gconnect Micro Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£50.00	£30	1	20	NK
Go-Plus Fast (Self-Install)	www.go-plus.net	£25.00	£60.00	Unlimited	10	Yes
Inweb Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.inweb.net.uk	£28.99	£76.38	Unlimited	10	Yes
Jings 500U PLUS	www.jings.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Jolt Home500 Lite (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£22.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Jolt Office500 (Self Install)	www.jolt.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	No
Kingston Karoo RapidTime Pro	www.kingstonbiz.net	£38.99	£150.00	Unlimited	20	Yes
MacAce AlwaysOn@Home ADSL500 (Self-Install)	www.macace.net	£29.99	£58.75	5	0	No
Madasafish Dazzle 500U 24	www.madasafish.com	£55.95	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Madasafish Dazzle 500U PLUS	www.madasafish.com	£59.99	£180.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
Mailbox Business Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£135.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox BusinessWire 500 (Self-Install)	www.mailbox.net.uk	£75.00	£30.00	10	25	Yes
Mailbox Standard Connect 500	www.mailbox.net.uk	£34.08	£30.00	10	25	Yes
MetroNet 500	www.metronet.co.uk	£35.99	£176.25	5	20	Yes
MetroNet S500	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
MetroNet S1000	www.metronet.co.uk	£186.83	£305.50	50	20	Yes
Netscalibur SoHo 500 (Self Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£34.08	£64.63	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£158.63	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
Netscalibur Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.netscalibur.co.uk	£116.33	£323.13	Unlimited	20	Yes
NewNet Business 1000 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£92.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£61.00	£25.00	Unlimited	125	Yes
NewNet Business 500 PLUS	www.newnet.co.uk	£88.13	£305.50	Unlimited	100	Yes
NewNet Home 500 M (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£32.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
NewNet Home 500 N (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£24.00	£25.00	5	0	Yes
NewNet Home 500 S (Self Install)	www.newnet.co.uk	£27.00	£25.00	Unlimited	25	Yes
OneTel Unplugged 500 Plug & Play (Self-Install)	www.onetel.co.uk	£27.99	£60.00	1	0	No
Onyx Business Broadband Silver (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£82.25	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
Onyx Home Office Broadband (Self-Install)	www.onyx-adsl.net	£29.99	N/A	Unlimited	0	Yes
Pipemedia USB 512K	www.adsl.uk.net	£57.58	£235.00	Unlimited	50	Yes
PIPEX Business 500	www.pipex.com	£82.19	£323.13	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£76.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Home Office (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£29.32	£70.50	12	50	Yes
PIPEX Xtreme Solo (Self-Install)	www.pipex.com	£23.44	£58.75	12	50	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 500	www.plus.net	£88.13	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home	www.plus.net	£22.99	£246.75	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 1000	www.plus.net	£129.25	£152.75	Unlimited	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart	www.plus.net	£246.75	£35.24	Unlimited	250	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Home Surf - Self Install	www.plus.net	£19.99	N/A	Unlimited	25	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Netstart - Self Install	www.plus.net	£35.24	£29.38	Unlimited	250	Yes

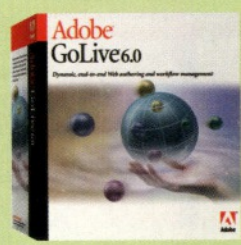
TOP BUYS

Web site builders

Dreamweaver MX

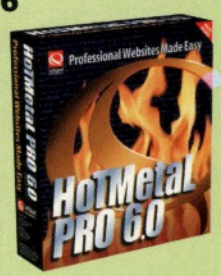
£352.31
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Reaches new levels of usability, all you need to create dynamic Web sites
What's bad? It's still very very expensive
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: 92%

Adobe GoLive 6



£229
www.adobe.com
What's good? Delivers superb results and allows you to create content for numerous different platforms
What's bad? It isn't cheap, some areas of the program still more baffling than Dreamweaver
Telephone: 020 8606 4001
Verdict: 82%

HoTMetaL Pro 6



£79
www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good? Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features
What's bad? The integration of HTML coding might bamboozle beginners
Telephone: 020 8387 4110
Verdict: 73%

Flash MX

£369
www.macromedia.com
What's good? The totally revamped interface is superior to its predecessors, plenty of new tools
What's bad? Still a bit expensive
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: 94%

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

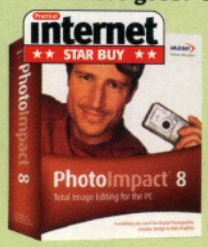
TOP BUYS

Web image editors

PhotoImpact 8

£89

www.ulead.co.uk



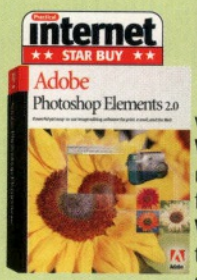
What's good? Comprehensive imaging package that takes the needs of Web users into account

What's bad? Could be considered pricey

Telephone: 01327 844755

Verdict: 91%

Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0



£88

www.adobe.com

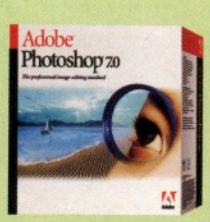
What's good? Unrivalled range of incredible features. Great value

What's bad? There aren't that many major changes since version one

Telephone: 020 8606 4000

Verdict: 92%

Adobe Photoshop 7.0



£586.33

www.adobe.com

What's good? A truly amazing set of tools for graphic professionals

What's bad? Expensive and still a little complicated in some areas

Telephone: 020 8606 4001

Verdict: 89%

JASC Paint Shop Pro 7 AE

£79+VAT

www.digitalworkshop.co.uk

What's good? Cheap, intuitive and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics

What's bad? Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Adobe's Photoshop

Telephone: 01295 258335

Verdict: 90%

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
PlusNet ADSL Office 500 - Self Install	www.plus.net	£64.63	£29.38	Unlimited	500	Yes
Poptel Home Office Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£41.07	£293.69	5	10	Yes
Poptel Home User Basic 500	www.poptel.coop	£35.19	£176.19	5	10	Yes
Poptel Office Standard 500	www.poptel.coop	£92.83	£305.50	5	10	Yes
Scotland4me	www.scotland4me.net	£29.38	£70.50	Unlimited	50	No
Silvermead Broadband (Self-Install)	www.silvermead.net	£28.99	£65.00	15	10	Yes
Sniff Out DreamTime (Self-Install)	www.sniffout.net	£23.49	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 1000 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£105.75	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Office 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£76.38	£70.50	500	250	Yes
Sonnet Internet Professional 500 Self-Install	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	£70.50	500	100	Yes
Star - Broad Star Remote	www.star.net.uk	£70.50	£293.75	0	0	No
Supanet - 0512Kbps	www.supanet.com	£29.99	£119.99	Unlimited	20	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Home User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£29.99	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL Online User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£28.20	£58.75	1	10	Yes
Timewarp ADSL SOHO User (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£40.00	£58.75	3	20	Yes
Timewarp Office 500 (Self-Install)	www.timewarp.co.uk	£94.00	£58.75	3	50	Yes
Tiscali Broadband (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£19.99	£50.00	6	100	Yes
Tiscali Broadband Plus (Self-Install)	www.tiscali.co.uk	£27.99	N/A	6	100	Yes
Tiscali T500	www.tiscali.co.uk	£89.29	£305.50	Unlimited	50	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Business	u.tv	£35.25	£58.75	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
UTV Clicksilver Residential	u.tv	£27.50	£49.50	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 500 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£64.63	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Home User (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£19.99	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 1000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£105.75	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
V Two One Business 2000 (Self-Install)	www.v21.co.uk	£159.25	£70.49	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
VIA NETWORKS United Kingdom Basic 500 (Self-Install)	www.vianetworks.co.uk	£82.25	£58.75	30	50	Yes
Virgin.net Broadband (Self-Install)	www.virgin.net	£24.99	£39.99	5	10	Yes
Vispa Home 500 (Self-Install)	www.vispa.net	£28.99	£58.75	Unlimited	15	Yes
Vulture Capital ADSL Connect (Self-Install)	www.vcisp.net	£25.99	£65.00	25	25	Yes
ZenADSL Home (Self-Install)	www.zenadsl.com	£25.52	£25.00	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Multi-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£76.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
ZenADSL Single-User 512Kbps	www.zenadsl.com	£29.99	£176.25	5	50	Yes
ZeNOC GamesStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£55.00	£100.00	5	20	Yes
ZeNOC WorkStream 512	www.zenoc.net	£115.00	£300.00	5	20	Yes

BROADBAND: CABLE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
blueyonder broadband 1Mb	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£39.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
Blueyonder broadband 500	info.blueyonder.co.uk/	£29.99	£50.00	15	30	Yes
NTL 128K	www.ntl.co.uk	£14.99	£25.00	15	55	Yes
NTL 1Mb	www.ntl.co.uk	£49.99	N/A	15	55	Yes
NTL 600K	www.ntl.co.uk	£24.99	N/A	15	55	Yes

BROADBAND: SATELLITE

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
Bentley Walker Bronze Surfer	www.bentleywalker.com	£75.00	£100.00	0	0	No
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/1	www.btopenworld.com/	£70.49	£1,056.33	20	20	Yes
BTopenworld Business Satellite 500/4	www.btopenworld.com/	£129.24	£1,526.33	100	20	Yes
Europe Online	www.europeonline.com	£6.36	N/A	5	0	Yes
HSIViaSat Home Edition	www.hsiviasat.com	£29.07	N/A	0	0	No
Mac-1 Internet USB Bronze	www.mac-1.com	£182.13	N/A	0	0	No
SatDrive	www.satdrive.com	£14.99	£399.00	0	0	No
Silvermead Satellite Broadband	www.silvermead.net	£34.99	£49.99	15	10	Yes
Skystorm	www.skystorm.net	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Starspeeder	www.starspeeder.co.uk	£17.63	N/A	0	0	No
Xantic	www.xanticbroadband.com	£29.38	£180.95	0	0	No

BROADBAND: WIRELESS

ISP	URL	MONTHLY COST	SETUP COST	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS
IAP Broadband	www.iap.uk.net	£29.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Broadband X2	www.iap.uk.net	£39.99	£150.00	10	10	Yes
IAP Unmetered	www.iap.uk.net	£11.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
IAP Unmetered X2	www.iap.uk.net	£19.99	£150.00	5	5	Yes
Liberty Broadband (business)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£111.61	£175.08	Unlimited	20	Yes
Liberty Broadband (consumer)	www.libertybroadband.co.uk	£46.99	£175.08	10	20	Yes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
Net 4 Nowt

0845 INTERNET PROVIDERS

NAME	URL	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V90	K64	K128
Abel GRATIS Plus	www.abelgratis.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
BlueCarrots Anywhere	www.bluecarrots.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
blueyonder	www.blueyonder.co.uk	15	30	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Breathepro Easyconnect	www.breathe.com	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
British Library Net	www.britishlibrary.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
BT Access	www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Home Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Free	www.charitydays.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chilly Hippo	www.chilly-hippo.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
ClaraNET	www.clara.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clearsignals	www.clearsignals.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Club 24 Internet	www.club24.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dabs netdial	www.dabs.net	25	25	No	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Dabsol	www.dabs.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Demon Express Total (Self-Install)	www.demon.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	NK	Yes	Yes
Devilnet United Kingdom	www.devilnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
EidosNet	www.eidosnet.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Plus	www.e-plus.co.uk	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Euphony.net	www.euphony.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Everywhere Broadband	www.everywherebroadband.com	10	20	Yes	NK	NK	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	No
Firenet	www.firenet.uk.net	15	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Flyer Internet	internet.flyer.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Business Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Force9 Free	www.force9.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free United Kingdom	www.freeuk.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freebeeb	www.beeb.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	No
Freedom 2 Surf	www.freedom2surf.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNEasy	www.freeneasy.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeNet	www.freenet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freenetname	www.freenetname.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Freeola.net	www.freeola.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Business Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Free	www.free-online.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freeserve NoTies	www.freeserve.com	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
FreeUnited Kingdom	www.freeuk.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Freewire	www.freewire.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
FreeZone	www.freezone.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Games Terminal	www.gterminal.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No	No
Go There Internet	www.gothere.uk.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GoFree	www.gofree.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Go-Legend	www.go-legend.net	Unlimited	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
GPAnet	www.gpanet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hot-Toast	www.hot-toast.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
i12	www.i12.com	Unlimited	500	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
IofM.net	www.iofm.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
IXUnited Kingdom	www.ixuk.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
JellyPeople.com	www.jellypeople.com	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loyal Mail	www.loyalmail.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No
MacUnlimited	www.macunlimited.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mersinet	www.mersinet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Messages	www.messages.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Ministry of Sound	www.ministryofsound.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
MWfree.net	www.mwfree.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
MyETI	www.eti.uk.com	Unlimited	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NASCR	www.nascr.net	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
NetDirect Online	www.instant.ndo.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
One Way Internet - PAYG	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Onet	www.onet.co.uk	Unlimited	30	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
OnlineServe Dial Lite	www.onlineserve.co.uk	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxfree	www.oxfree.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Business Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Free	www.plus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prontoserve	www.Prontoserve.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	No	Yes	Yes
Qadisho	www.qadisho.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Rapidial	www.Rapidial.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
RugbyWeb	www.rugbyweb.co.uk	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No	No
Sniff Out Classic	www.sniffout.net	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sonnet Internet Just Dial	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
South West Net	www.swest.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Sparticus.net	www.sparticus.net	Unlimited	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supanet Classic	www.supanet.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
SurfAnytime	www.surfanytime.co.uk	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Tellnet	www.tellnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tiscali Pay As You Go	www.tiscali.co.uk	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes	No
Vispa Connect Valuetime	www.vispa.net	Unlimited	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vulture Capital Easy Connect	www.vcisp.net	25	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes	No
Waitrose.com	www.waitrose.com	Unlimited	20	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	No

TOP BUYS

Digital cameras

Nikon CoolPix 4500

£599
www.nikon.co.uk
What's good? Quality snapper that yields great results with very little effort
What's bad? Looks really weird
Telephone: 020 8481 6875
Verdict: 90%

Kodak CX4230

£199.99
www.kodak.co.uk
What's good? Nice range of easy-to-use features
What's bad? Needs newer hardware to run at full pelt
Telephone: 0870 243 0270
Verdict: 84%

Rioch Caplio RR1

£749.99
www.rioch.co.uk
What's good? A sleek slimline camera with oodles of quality to boot
What's bad? Looks a bit cheap and the zoom is a little bit dodgy
Telephone: 01782 753300
Verdict: 90%

Pentax Optio 330

£499
www.pentax.co.uk
What's good? Excellent features and options. Compact and cheap at the price
What's bad? Its bulk can be bothersome
Telephone: 01753 792792
Verdict: 91%

Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

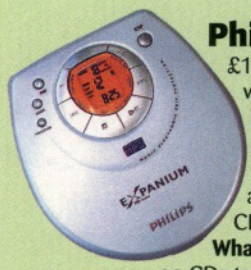
MP3 Players

Apple iPod

£349.99
www.apple.com/uk
What's good? Brilliant sound quality and the best designed player on the market
What's bad? It isn't compatible with Windows and it's overpriced
Telephone: 0800 039 1010
Verdict: 82%

Iomega HipZip

£290
www.iomega-europe.com
What's good? Uses removable media instead of flash memory, which is cheaper
What's bad? Bulkier and heavier than the Rio, also expensive
Telephone: 020 7365 9527
Verdict: 78%



Philips EXP303

£119.99
www.philips.com
What's good? Stylish, inexpensive and easy to use. It actually plays MP3 CDs!
What's bad? Still relies on CDs to play music
Telephone: 020 8665 6350
Verdict: 79%

Nomad Jukebox 3

£349.99
www.creative.com/europe

What's good? Huge storage capacity and stunning sound quality
What's bad? Odd navigation system and PC interface
Telephone: N/A
Verdict: 92%

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

ISP	URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQ	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
0800Dial Home User	www.0800dial.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
0800onlineserve	www.0800.onlineserve.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	10	Yes	Free
1066ad.com Maxi Surf	www.1066ad.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
1066ad.com Mini Surf	www.1066ad.com	£10.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
123ISP Standard	www.123isp.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twilight	www.123isp.co.uk	£4.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
123ISP Twin Lite	www.123isp.co.uk	£18.95	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
24-7Freecall	www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
4theNET Business Anytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£23.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNet Unlimited 24/7	www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Daytime	www.4thenet.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
4theNET Unlimited Off-peak	www.4thenet.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Abel DIAL Anytime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£27.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime	www.abelalways.co.uk	£11.99	No	No	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 25p
AOL	www.aol.co.uk	£15.99	No	No	7	14	Yes	Free
Arsenal AnyTime	www.arsenal.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Arsenal Hometime	www.arsenal.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz BusinessTime	www.asian-biz.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz HomeTime	www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Evenings & Weekends	www.asian-biz.net	£13.00	No	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Barclaycard.net	www.barclaycard.net	£12.95	Yes	Yes	5	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots At Home	www.bluecarrots.com	£8.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
BlueCarrots Unlimited	www.bluecarrots.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Blueyonder SurfUnlimited	www.blueyonder.co.uk	£12.00	No	No	15	30	Yes	Premium – 50p
Boltblue Anytime	www.boltblue.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	National Rate
Breathe At Home	www.breathe.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Plus	www.breathe.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathe Unlimited	www.breathe.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Breathepro Connect	www.breathe.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	Yes	Local Rate
BT Connect Lite Anytime	www.btclickforbusiness.com	£17.63	Yes	Yes	20	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
BTopenworld Anytime	www.btopenworld.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	10	50	Yes	Free
BTopenworld for BT Surf	www.btopenworld.com	£12.99	No	Yes	5	10	Yes	Free
Business Unmetered Business User	www.business-unmetered.com	£15.26	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Business Unmetered Business User 24	www.business-unmetered.com	£21.14	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Chalkface Anytime	www.chalkface.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
CharityDAYS Donate At Work Lite	www.charitydays.net	£29.36	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite	www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Standard	www.charitydays.net	£16.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 12	www.clara.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 35	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 80	www.clara.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime AnyTime	www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET Freetime Anytime Business	www.clara.net	£24.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited	www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
Dabs netinfinity	www.dabs.net	£15.99	Yes	Yes	25	25	No	Local Rate
Datanet SurfTime Off-Peak	www.datadsl.co.uk	£16.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	Premium – £1.00
Demon Premier Connect	www.demon.net	£18.75	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Local Rate
dmc:dial surf:access	www.dmcdial.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:biz	www.dmcdial.com	£23.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
dmc:dial surf:lite	www.dmcdial.com	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Fast24 Alltime	www.fast24.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Anytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£10.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Daytime	www.fast24.co.uk	£11.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast24 Off Peak	www.fast24.co.uk	£7.00	Yes	Yes	20	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Fast4 Unlimited	www.fast4.net	£6.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	0	Yes	National Rate
Fasthosts FreeCall Home	dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	200	Yes	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime	www.firenet.uk.net	£11.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Force9 Connect Biz	www.force9.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect BizLite	www.force9.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Heavy	www.force9.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Lite	www.force9.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Force9 Connect Standard	www.force9.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Biz	www.free-online.co.uk	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect BizLite	www.free-online.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Heavy	www.free-online.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Lite	www.free-online.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard	www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Free24-7	www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	0	0	Yes	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Home Lite	www.freechariot.co.uk	£5.75	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Home Off-Peak	www.freechariot.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Universal 24/7	www.freechariot.co.uk	£16.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freechariot FC Unlimited	www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime	www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Standard BT
Freeserve Anytime	www.freeserve.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Freeserve HomeTime	www.freeserve.com	£12.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	150	Yes	Premium – 50p
Games-World	www.games-world.net	£19.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	National Rate
Gconnect Anytime 64K	www.adsl-business.co.uk	£19.98	NK	No	1	20	NK	National Rate

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
Net 4 Nowt

ISP	URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQ	EMAILS	WEB SPACE (Mb)	NEWSGROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
GlenWorld	www.glen-world.co.uk	£14.95	Unk	Yes	0	0	Unk	N/A
Go-Plus	www.go-plus.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	10	Yes	Premium – 75p
ic24 Office Hours	www.ic24.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	1	0	No	Premium – 50p
Jings	www.jings.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	No	Premium – 50p
Jolt Anytime	www.jolt.co.uk	£24.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	No	N/A
MacAce BusinessDaytime	www.macace.net	£29.38	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree	www.macace.net	£12.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
MacAce Homefree24	www.macace.net	£16.00	Yes	Yes	5	0	No	National Rate
Madasafish	www.madasafish.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	1	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
nStream	www.nstream.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	25	No	Standard BT
NTL world	www.ntl.co.uk	£10.00	No	No	15	55	Yes	Free
One Way Internet	www.onewayinternet.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	100	Yes	Premium – 25p
OneTel	www.onetel.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	3	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1 Weekdays	www.pipex.com/	£70.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 3	www.pipex.com/	£46.71	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 5	www.pipex.com/	£34.96	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e	www.pipex.com/	£23.21	Yes	Yes	12	50	Yes	National Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz	www.plus.net	£39.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Lite	www.plus.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	500	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Heavy User	www.plus.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Lite User	www.plus.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Standard	www.plus.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	250	Yes	Local Rate
Powergen Anytime	www.pgen.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Daytime	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Powergen Evenings & Weekends	www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	National Rate
Qadisho Business Unlimited	www.qadisho.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Home Lite	www.qadisho.com	£5.75	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Home Off-Peak	www.qadisho.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Universal	www.qadisho.com	£16.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Qadisho Unlimited	www.qadisho.com	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
Quicksurfer Anytime	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Business	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£15.00	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Business Plus	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£23.50	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Daytime	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
Quicksurfer Evenings & Weekends	www.quicksurfer.co.uk	£7.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
SafariConnect Anytime	www.safariconnect.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
SafariConnect Home&Away	www.safariconnect.com	£19.99	Yes	Yes	5	15	Yes	Premium – 50p
Silvermead Business Unlimited	www.silvermead.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Silvermead Off-Peak	www.silvermead.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
Silvermead Unlimited @ Home	www.silvermead.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	National Rate
SniffOut PeakTime	www.sniffout.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Local Rate
SniffOut SmartTime	www.sniffout.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – 50p
SniffOut TimeOut	www.sniffout.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Premium – 50p
Sonnet Internet Solo 24/7	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite 24/7	www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	25	Yes	Local Rate
Southgrove Business 24/7	www.southgrove.com	£24.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Business Daytime	www.southgrove.com	£16.50	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Surfer+	www.southgrove.com	£9.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Surfer+ 24/7	www.southgrove.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
Southgrove Twilight Surfer	www.southgrove.com	£5.95	Yes	Yes	7	0	Yes	National Rate
SupaNet Supahighway	www.supanet.com	£14.99	No	Yes	Unlimited	20	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Business Unlimited	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£14.08	Yes	Yes	100	100	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£29.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	50	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Diamond Plus	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£34.99	Yes	Yes	Unlimited	75	Yes	Premium – 50p
SurfAnytime Gold	www.surfanytime.co.uk	£15.49	Yes	Yes	15	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
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Tesco.net Anytime	www.tesco.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	5	10	Yes	Premium – 50p
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The Posh ISP	www.theposh.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	7	10	Yes	National Rate
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www.europe.creative.com

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Telephone: 01245 265265

Verdict: 82%

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www.sonyisstorage.com

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Telephone: 00800 2623 7669

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www.logitech.com

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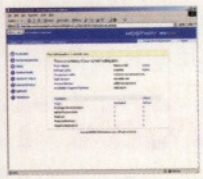

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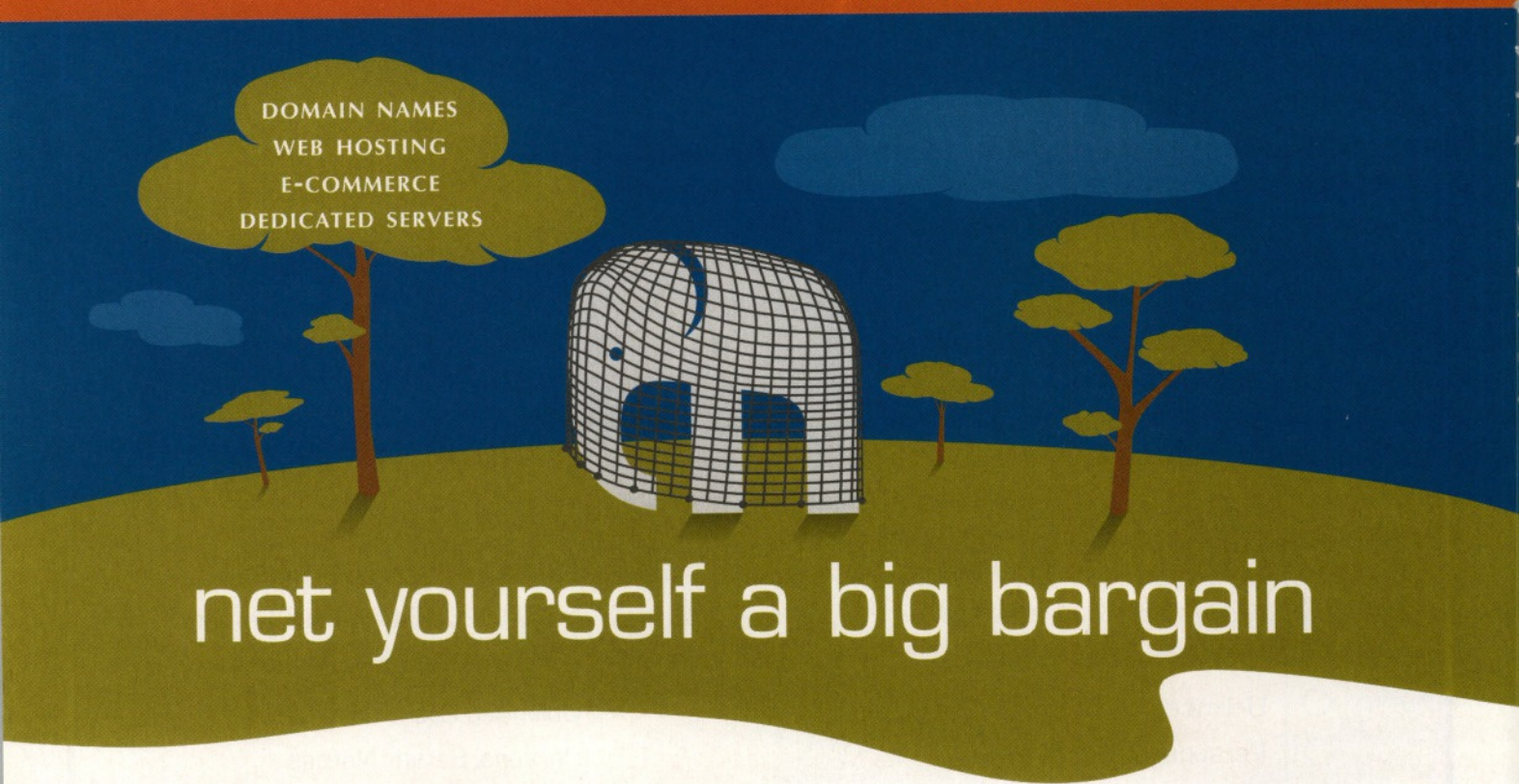

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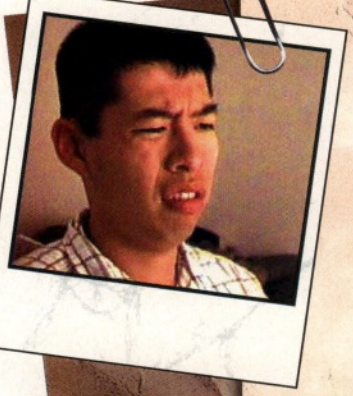


Name:
'Emotion' Eric

Last seen at:
www.emotioneric.com

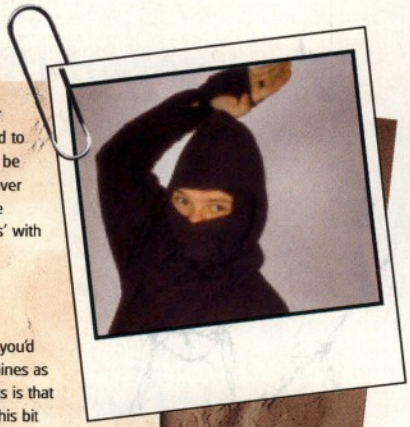
Wanted for:
Pulling funny faces and generally larking about with a Webcam in a comedy style. In this cold, technology-obsessed age, Eric has found a unique market for supplying heartfelt emotions to his legion of online fans. You'll be truly amazed as this master of expression somehow indulges the perverse postings left on his site. Ever wondered what Eric would look like while fantasising over Ricky Martin? We sincerely doubt it, but the point is somebody did, and the hilarious results are there to prove it.

Characteristics:
Should the wind change, this jokester will be easy to spot. That is of course when the rubber-faced fellow leaves his apartment to continue his 'adventures' across the globe. You may have seen him getting into all manner of slapstick trouble during a leisurely airport jog. If not, there's always the tomfoolery that's being fired from a Scottish cannon while looking for gold, or the harassment of German beach babes.

For whatever reason, the emotional one finds himself unemployed at the moment, so it's an ideal time for those 'Eric waiting three miserable hours to sign on' requests.

Significant others:
A measure of a good actor is the ability to convey the expressive subtlety of facial reactions. On this evidence Eric is no Anthony Hopkins, but his 'crazy' antics have certainly impressed those who should know better. 'Eric being given a movie contract' has already become a reality, with the site confirming a cameo appearance in the new Matrix flick. He also filmed a pilot TV show, only for the plug to be pulled at the last minute. 'Eric bursting into tears as his showbiz dreams are shattered?' There'll be no need for any special effects on that one then.

Quote:
"Oh no, you missed it! He didn't actually say anything but made a really funny face..."



Name:
Robert Hamburger

Last seen at:
www.realultimatepower.net

Wanted for:
Impersonating a ninja, what else? Try adding responsibility for either the most hilarious or deluded home page of all time. If Beavis, Butthead or Eric Cartman grew up and actually managed to breed, Robert might be the scary product. This pre-pubescent kid not only dresses in ninja pyjamas, gets seriously 'pumped up' (angry), but also fantasises about doing physical damage to his own mother's head. Charming – or 'sweet' in Bobby's own eloquent words.

Characteristics:
The worrying thing about this character is he could very well be any over-excitable child. Slightly more unnerving is that when Robert ditches the pjs, his equally passionate penchant for hippos has him... yes, dressed in some sort of suit like George from Rainbow. According to him, hippos are 'like crazy and awesome' dude, but nowhere near as 'cool' as ninjas. To prove how much he admires these stealthy assassins, Robert has written several 'tall' stories or movie scripts that have to be read to be believed (or not). We may not be *Practical Martial Arts*, but have never experienced any trained Japanese warriors beheading 'stupid pirates' with 'wailing' electric guitars.

Significant others:
If you buy into ninja folklore then you'd imagine these deadly killing machines as detached, lonely figures. The guess is that Robert has managed to emulate this bit extremely well, regardless of his alleged access to hoards of willing girls. However, his best mate Mark's photo suggests an older and more mature influence, as he 'shows off' by leaping out of a bin with a nasty twig. If that fails to impress, there's always committing suicide the ninja way with 'Seppuku'. Although it's difficult to appreciate the frustration that leads to ingesting a folded Frisbee, there's little harm in watching the kid try.

Quote:
"My name is Robert and I can't stop thinking about ninjas. These guys are cool; and by cool, I mean totally sweet"

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MAGAZINE TEAM
Editor Thomas Watson
thomas@paragon.co.uk
01202 209379
Managing Editor Paul Newman
Features Editor James Thornton
Staff Writer Mark Billen
Group Art Editor Steve Gotobed
Senior Designer Nicky Bartlett
Senior Sub Editor Jo Cole
Sub Editor Colleen Johnson

CONTRIBUTORS
Phillip Bennison, Hal Devlin, Cindy Duffield, Chris Ellison, Gerard Liston, Darren Lock, Danny McAleer, Clive Parker, Matt Powell, James Seabright, Mark Shufflebottom, Andy Stewart, Nick Sweeney

ADVERTISING
Advertising Sales Manager
Leylah Honeyborne
(01202 200223)
leylah@paragon.co.uk
Display Sales Executive
Duncan James
(01202 209363)
duncanj@paragon.co.uk
Classified Advertising Executive
Gemma Bell
(01202 200254)
gemmab@paragon.co.uk
Copy Controllers Jo Spick, Caroline Bradford

COVERDISC SUPPORT
Coverdisc Support
Having difficulty with our coverdisc? See the disc pages for information
Cover CD Production
Tristan Jacobs
tristanj@paragon.co.uk
Multimedia Editor
Lee Cornish
lee@paragon.co.uk

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION
Production Manager
Dave Osborne
Bureau Manager Chris Rees
Scanning/prepress Wesley Neil
Circulation Manager Tim Harris
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200200
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 200217

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DIRECTORS
Editorial Director Damian Butt
Production Director Jane Hawkins
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Advertising Director Peter Cleall
Art Director Mark Kendrick
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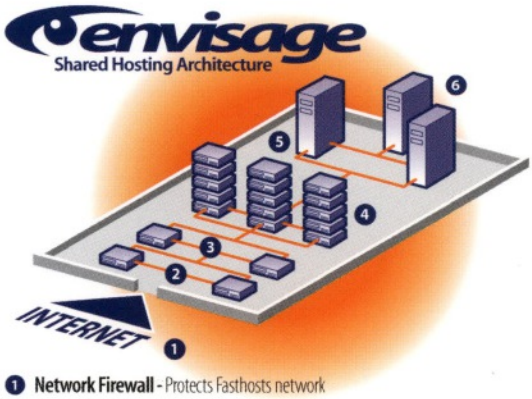

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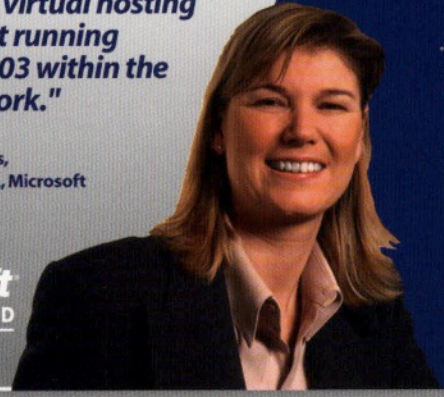

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